

KOWTOW

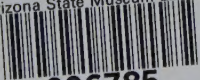


PRINCESS DER LING





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TWO YEARS IN THE FORBIDDEN CITY

OLD BUDDHA

KOWTOW



HE DIDN'T SEEM TO MIND THAT THE PADDED GOWN WAS SOAKED

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KOWTOW

BY PRINCESS DER LING

Illustrated by
S. PINKUS



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NEW YORK

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To
MY SON

INTRODUCTION

DEAR MOTHER:

It's very nice of you, Mother, to dedicate your story to me. I hadn't expected it. And after reading the manuscript, I am not sure that you were wise in permitting me this glimpse at your own childhood. You have so often told me of certain things I should not do; that I should be especially respectful to my elders; should obey my teachers; should study hard; should be staid and dignified. Yet I note from your story that you played pranks on your elders, made fun openly of your tutors . . . and if ever you were staid and dignified, I failed to find evidence thereof in your autobiography.

Since people say that other people who write autobiographies never tell the whole truth, I am wondering if there aren't whole chapters of pranks, lack of application to study, etc., which you have hidden from me. There *must* be.

However, since I find that you did the things you will not permit me to do, and yet you have been able to accomplish so much, I feel that I am not entirely hopeless after all. And so, I love you more than ever, for allowing me to see your past. If only I can do as well, for all my faults, as you have, I shall be content.

Your loving son,

THADDEUS.

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KOWTOW

MEMORIES OF SHA-SSU

IN the heart of Sha-Ssu, at a Manchu breakfast table, sat the most mischievous little Manchu child of six years I have ever known. She was stubborn, spoiled and willful, mostly because her father loved her and could deny her nothing. She was exactly at that age where Manchu children should begin to learn things; but I am very much afraid this particular little rebel felt she knew quite enough already, and that to take up the study of Chinese classics, as her father wished her to do, would be a waste of time.

Why study when the world outside the study room was full of mysteries, when the sun was always shining, there were goldfish of every hue in the garden pond to be investigated, and it was really so confining in the study room? Besides, tutors who taught the Chinese classics to families of the higher class were men who had never learned to laugh, who regarded laughter in the young as something approaching disease, and a giggle the rankest sacrilege.

This little lady of six summers—turbulent summers, too, because she was never still, and never satisfied unless she was playing pranks on someone—had had many

tutors, and was just now trying a new one, because all who had gone before had gone disgruntled, excusing themselves to the father by saying that "that child" was simply incorrigible, and beyond the power of any one man to manage.

They sat about the table, this Manchu family, and the child who talked the most, and said the least perhaps, was this little girl. When one knows that children of Manchu and Chinese families must speak only when spoken to, the fact that this little lady had *carte blanche* to prattle all she wished—and her tongue was never still—proves at once that one little Manchu child was spoiled indeed.

She wasn't happy, if a child of six years may really be said to be unhappy. She had just returned from Europe—of which she retained, however, but the vaguest memories—to discover in a roundabout way from her father, facts which only now possess their full significance: that the ways she had learned in Europe were not China's ways, and that it was really very dangerous even so much as to talk about those ways, or to pine for European ways aloud. She had heard that dreadful things might happen to her father, that he might even forfeit his life, if it became generally known that he was rearing his family as Occidental families are reared, instead of adhering with grueling exactitude to the old Chinese customs.

So the father, who perhaps liked European ways the

best, returned to Chinese ways when he returned to China; and this little girl of the breakfast table, who in Europe had dressed and behaved like European children, found herself another girl entirely, whom she scarcely recognized in the mirror in which she constantly preened herself.

European frocks had given way to padded gowns, because the winters of Sha-Ssu were cold. Even her little shoes were thoroughly padded—and she was such a little thing she resembled nothing so much as a toy balloon equipped with legs that waddled because they were so thickly padded, too.

Then the hair! The hair was very black, and the child was proud of her hair. In Europe she had worn it in curls, like European girls. In China, when her father wished to disguise from busybodies the fact that he preferred the ways of Europe for his children, her hair was combed straight into a sort of queue, and tied—of all things atrocious and unlovely!—with a ribbon that was very red.

Of all the memories of Sha-Ssu, those padded gowns, the toy gunboat feet, and above all the atrocious red ribbon on the hair combed tightly into a queue that was like an ugly horn, remain even today the most maddening to that little lady who has long since grown up. I can still see that girl of the busy tongue, the rolling eyes which looked always for some new mischief to perform, the waddling feet, and the roly-poly body that

was like a toy balloon gone a-walking. I can see the child plainly, because of all those who knew her, made excuses for her, scolded her, and prophesied that she would come to some bad end, I knew her best—and must say that I sympathized with her above all the others, with one exception—her father!

Breakfast would soon be over. The little girl must study from the Chinese classics, under the eyes of a tutor whom she disliked because he was a tutor, and, above all other tutors, because he was hers. From eight o'clock of the morning until twelve o'clock noon; a brief pause that was always all too short for *tiffin*, and then to the study room afterward to slave away at Chinese classics, and Chinese writing, until both pupil and tutor were worn out, disgruntled, each with the other—then dinner and play time.

Oh, yes, and the morning curtsy to Father and Mother! That was when the children came down to begin the day, and Father and Mother must be greeted with all the courtesy and respect which is never forgotten in Manchu and Chinese homes. I can very plainly see that roly-poly child, with her absurd pigtail—tied with that red ribbon!—bowing before her father and mother like a mechanical doll with rolling eyes.

Then the study room, after breakfast, and the first lesson under the new tutor. The little girl, whose antics had discouraged so many tutors to the point of resigning, was to have a new one from Honan, where tutors

were supposed to be stern, unbending, unsmiling, and perfectly willing to eat little girls who misbehaved. This particular tutor had a nickname which, translated into English, meant "skin them alive." What a name for a tutor to have if that tutor wished to rule by fear! But I am very much afraid that one naughty little girl of my remembrance was unimpressed, for she told me herself of the first passage of words which took place between them.

She began it immediately after she and the other children and the harsh-faced tutor had seated themselves to begin the lesson. Who cared about Chinese classics, which even grown-ups—in spite of patient explanations by tutors who probably didn't understand either, and exercised verbosity to hide their ignorance—could not comprehend? For a girl of six years, and not a very attentive one either, to think of mastering such abstruse subjects appealed to this little girl of my memories as being one of life's most absurd absurdities—and even to-day, she tells me, she has scarcely changed her opinion!

The Honan tutor cleared his throat, preparatory to launching into an endless elucidation of the Chinese classics.

And the little girl of my memories giggled! So much for the effect of that dread "skin them alive" nickname!

The tutor raised his head with a portentous frown.

"Don't laugh!" he snapped.

"Why not?"

"Because it isn't seemly, dignified or respectful! Do you see this switch? It is a signal of authority, and if you laugh, or otherwise conduct yourself as lacking in dignity, I shall most assuredly whip you with it!"

The willful girl of memories rolled her eyes and kept on giggling.

"Do you really skin people alive?" she asked eagerly, as though anxious for the tutor to demonstrate for her delectation.

He did not answer this question, but once more tapped the switch which was always under his right hand, ready for instant use.

The little girl of memories extended a very tiny hand, which looked all the tinier because the girl in her padded gown—and that red ribbon on the pigtail!—was so over-stuffed and pudgy, and grasped the switch which the tutor had indicated.

"Is this the way you use the switch?" she questioned.

To illustrate her meaning, this willful girl brought the switch down across the frowning tutor's head, bringing forth a scream that contrasted oddly with the giggle of the child!

The girl had almost, with the very beginning of the first lesson under the Honan tutor, deprived herself of the inestimable services of that tutor; and, since I recall that little girl with no little affection, which however does not even now condone her mischief-making tendencies, I can find no sympathy in my heart for the tutor

from Honan—who must now be dead and gone these many years; peace to his ashes! It was not his fault that he was a failure as a tutor in that Sha-Ssu household.

For an hour or two the study room was a-buzz, as the children of the family intoned their lessons, punctuated by sharp words from the tutor, who would never forget or forgive the use to which his switch had been put. Then it was time for the servants to bring tea for the tutor. It happened that the father of the child came into the study room just as the tea was brought. The tutor executed the customary polite bowings and bendings, and engaged the father in conversation.

This was one of those alway-occurring opportunities for which the willful child watched perpetually with those rolling eyes of hers. With a finger to her lip for silence, she took the teapot from the servant, beckoned him out, and placed the pot on the stool from which the tutor had risen.

The father left after a few moments of conversation.

The tutor, excited at having been honored by the master's visit, forgot all about tea for the moment, until, seating himself pompously, he unseated himself immediately afterward in a way that was not pompous at all, while the teapot upon which he had lowered his rather heavy person broke into a thousand fragments; and a thoroughly wet Chinese gown and a thoroughly exasperated teacher of Chinese classics rewarded the girl of my memories for her thought and labor.

The father was at once brought into conference anent the matter. The tutor went to find him with all celerity—taking with him the girl, bound up in those padded clothes and the horrid red ribbon—and it was the consensus of opinion that the girl of my memories should be soundly whipped. Even today I feel that the girl should have been roundly spanked. But as I recall that date, there were two dissenters in this discussion relative to spanking “that child.”

The chief dissenter, of course, was “that child.”

The second, and most important dissenter, was the child’s father.

He tried to look very stern about it, but there had always been a bond of love between father and daughter that both knew, recognized, and appreciated beyond the meaning of the word—something as deep as parental love mingled with that different kind of love which the American word “pal” evokes in the minds of folk who are pals, and have them.

“Go out into the garden at once!” said the father sternly; but his eyes were twinkling, either in amusement at the pranks of his daughter, or because of the bedraggled appearance of one honest tutor of classics.

So, forgetting all about the matter, turning at the door to giggle rather shamelessly, I’m afraid, at the crest-fallen tutor, the child hurried alone into the garden, where the many-hued goldfish were, the monsters in stone, the winding walks, the flowers that always

bloomed and that were always sweet, to the pond with the sun sprinkling gold and silver on her bosom, where a tiny cockleshell of a canoe was tied up to a willow tree.

Now this girl of memories knew perfectly well that no juvenile member of the family was ever permitted to enter this canoe alone; but this girl was stubborn and willful, which explains many things.

Growing in the pond were many *ling*—something like water-chestnuts, commonly called “water-buffalo horns”—which were delicious to the taste. The fascinating shapes of them were just beneath the surface, and of course the *ling* which intrigued this little lady most were those most distant from the shore, and from the safe haven of the willow tree. So she untied the painter, stepped into the rickety canoe, and paddled out—while the canoe rocked and bucked and rolled from side to side—toward the *ling* which most intrigued her.

She stopped her frail craft and extended tiny hands into the water toward the goal of, at the moment, her heart’s desire—and the inevitable happened! It was well for this girl of memories that the water was very shallow, for, in a fraction of a fraction of a second, the girl was in the water, and an empty canoe was dancing away across the bosom of the pond, upon which dancing, laughing waves were breaking up the mantle of silver and gold into a thousand laughing facets of light.

I can tell you that one frightened, padded-gowned,

pigtailed—red ribboned!—toy-balloon-like Manchu girl had stopped giggling with almost startling suddenness; for the water was cold, and she was badly frightened. She had forgotten all about *ling*!

Frightened family and screaming servants came forth at the uproar. What they thought is a matter of conjecture, though there is no doubt that every spectator had merely decided that this was just another prank of "that child," who was most ludicrous of appearance as she floundered to the shore, wet from heels to pigtailed crown, exercising her lungs in a manner most unmaidenly, sending the goldfish slashing through the water to every hiding place, setting the *ling*—which no longer interested her!—to bowing and bending beneath the surface like senseless worshippers at some under water shrine of water sprites.

It was the child's father who took that naughty girl in his arms, and, though he was dressed in the rich garments of his rank, preparatory to receiving visitors of high degree, he didn't seem to mind that the padded gown was soaked, that water dripped from the bundle in his arms like an overfilled sponge, nor that the screaming of the child was bad for the eardrums of those who listened.

No, he seemed to think of none of these things. He tucked the child's head against his breast, and spoke to her crooningly, comfortingly, as only that father could.

Well, it was the consensus of opinion that the child should be spanked.

But again there were two dissenters.

The first, of course, was the child herself, who was quite spoiled.

The second, and most important dissenter, was the child's father, who spoiled her because he loved her.

Strange as it may seem, that child's father was *my* father—and he was, of all the world, the very best father I could have chosen; while I—or had you guessed it?—was the little girl of six summers who had just begun a day which was like countless other days that followed, like countless other days which had gone before.

The father's name was Lord Yü Keng, while my name—well, in those days I was called many things, depending entirely upon who happened to be calling!

II

THE SOLEMN COURTYARD

THE ducking was forgotten as my father crooned to me, and healed my fancied hurts with his kindness. He had a way of doing it that erased all pain instantly, as no doctor—especially a Chinese doctor!—could have managed.

But Father, who was Inspector of *Likin* at Sha-Ssu, was expecting callers, and one never could tell when callers might ask to see the children of the household. So we had to change our wet clothing, Father and I, and when my hurts had been salved with the voice of sympathy and understanding, I was sent away to an *amah* to be changed into dry clothing, while Father went back to don new robes to meet the officials who were coming.

As the *amah* made me pretty again I forgot entirely the experience in search of the elusive *ling*, and made the *amah* hurry so that I might go forth and find something else with which to amuse myself.

The *amah* changed me from the hide out, putting me into a padded gown, gunboat shoes, and placing an entirely new red ribbon about my bedraggled hair which had been once more crushed into the shape of that hate-

ful queue! Not even after one had had a ducking, and must change clothing, might one escape the padded gown, the big shoes, and the red ribbon on the queue! How I hated those things I was compelled to wear!

I was dressed long before my father was, and hurried to the courtyard where he was to receive the officials who served him, and I suppose I had some idea in my mind about hiding somewhere and spying upon the visitors. I had seen many visitors come to my father, and go again; and their strange other-worldness had never ceased to fascinate me. I liked to watch them off guard, before Father came, to catch the polite change which always came over them when Father announced himself ready to receive them.

But I had no sooner entered that silent courtyard, before the hall of audience, than I forgot—I was always rather scatterbrained!—the exact reason why I had come. This courtyard had always intrigued me. There were many huge trees, around which, when the sun shone, the courtyard speckled with an ever shifting pattern of sunlight and shadow—shadow and sunlight that always moved, dappling the courtyard. I used to fancy, standing beneath the trees, that when their leaves rubbed together they were whispering to me, spying upon me—for I knew I had no business in this courtyard where officials came. So, to fool the unseen ones who whispered when I came in, and spied upon me even when my back was turned to deceive them, I always

walked on tiptoe, with my tongue sticking out in concentration on the task, whatever it might be, which I had set myself.

This time, however, I had come to spy upon someone else, the officials whom my father was to receive in a very few minutes. While, as their superior, it was Father's privilege to keep visitors waiting until he was pleased to receive them, my father never liked to do this, and kept his appointments with exacting promptness.

But, even so, I had beaten him to the courtyard, where I immediately forgot the mission I had set myself, and for an excellent reason, from the viewpoint of a child of six.

I glanced over the trees which had always whispered at me before, wondering why I hadn't noticed this strange thing on previous visits. The trees began to whisper at once, rubbing their leaves one against the other, and to furl and unfurl gently upon the cobblestones of the solemn courtyard the pattern of sunlight and shadow cast by the sun passing through. The stones of the walks were all of different sizes, and workingmen had achieved some very remarkable patterns in their efforts to piece all the bits together in walks that looked not at all like walks.

But what bothered me most—and I was just now discovering it, when that tree must have been like that for many months—was simply this: one tree, of all the many in the courtyard of audience, had no leaves!

It was a great puzzle to me, and struck me as being grossly unfair that, while most of the trees in the courtyard were verdant with an abundance of sweet smelling green leaves, this particular tree should have been singled out to have no leaves at all. The tree, of course, was dead; but even the word had no meaning for me then, and I straightway set about correcting the error Nature seemed to have made in her distribution of leaves that rubbed together, and whispered to children who came in against the rules.

I had been a regular tomboy since I could walk, and tree climbing had been one of my many accomplishments. So now I knew instantly how to correct this error of Nature's—and perhaps if I were good to this one tree, all its friends would notice; and perhaps the whispering would cease, and I could come to the solemn courtyard afterward without being spied upon and warned away.

So I hurried to a tree which had more leaves than it needed, and climbed up the slippery boll with all the surety of any child, of any country, of the age of six years.

I climbed into the tree where the leaves were thickest and very carefully began to pluck the leaves all about me, thrusting them into my clothing wherever I could find thrusting place. Then, after a few minutes during which my hands were never idle, looking more like a toy balloon than ever, save that toy balloons are not so

freely protuberant of leaves, I climbed back down quickly and dashed to the tree which had no leaves.

I climbed up, up to the topmost branches, where, carefully removing from their hiding places the leaves I had plucked, I began to fasten them to the twigs of the tree that was dead. It seemed very simple to me. I merely punched holes in the leaves with the twigs to which I fastened them, and made sure in my own mind that when my labor of love had been completed, and I had taken leaves from all the trees which could spare them, the leafless tree would be resplendent again, and not continue to make unsightly the courtyard where Father met his officials.

And, naturally enough, I was high up in the tree, with scarcely half the leaves in place upon the dead twigs, when I heard the pad-pad of men's feet, and knew by the steady pound of them that my father's callers had arrived and were being borne into the courtyard in sedan-chairs carried by perspiring coolies. I heard the clacking sound of wood against wood, and knew—I was afraid to look around, because the strangers might laugh at me!—that the sedan-chair coolies had rested the poles of their chairs on those notched poles which they always utilize when resting on a journey, or at the end of it when the master is ready to step down.

Then I stole a glance, and discovered that there would



I WAS HIGH UP IN THE TREE, WITH SCARCELY HALF THE LEAVES IN
PLACE UPON THE DEAD TWIGS

be no chance to escape discovery. I decided to remain very quiet, not moving at all, in the hope that none would see me, quite overlooking the fact that I had not yet clothed the dead tree with sufficient leaves to hide myself.

The visitors stepped grandly forth from their chairs, into the courtyard, and their gowns rivaled the plumage of the peacock, or the gorgeous colors of the rainbow. And, of course, casting that inevitable glance all about the courtyard, the visitors saw me at once!

One of them came over beneath the tree and looked up at me.

"What are you doing, child?" he asked gravely.

"I am giving this tree the leaves somebody forgot to give her," I somehow managed to tell the questioner. Had I not been in Europe, where girls are freer than in China, I would never have dared speak to this stranger.

"But can't you see," said the official, "that the tree is dead, that it won't grow any leaves of its own? Don't you know that in a day or two your leaves will die, and the tree will be no better off than before?"

"Never mind," I told him pertly, "the other trees have more than their share, and when these go away I can always get others to take their places!"

The man smiled and went back to his friends.

A second man spoke.

"Is that Yü Keng's child?" he said.

Since that day, when that question was asked, I have never ceased to wonder why adults will ask questions about children where the children can hear, and why many adults will be so heartless and cruel with their questions.

"Yes," said the first man, "that is *one* of his children."

"She certainly has a pretty little face," said the second man.

Instantly I began to swell with pride. I wished for a mirror to test the truth of the stranger's statement. And then the first man almost broke my heart.

"Yes," he said, "she *has* a pretty face—but she has big feet!"

The quick tears rushed to my eyes. I looked down at my feet. To me they were almost incredibly small, and very dainty, and looked even smaller as they peeped out under my padded gown. But the remark of that man made them seem to grow under my eyes until they were truly enormous, even nearing the size of those gunboats to which I have likened them. For me this stranger had suddenly drawn a black cloud across the sunshine, shutting out the brightness of the day which, in spite of mishaps like ducking in the garden pond, had been so mellow and wondrous.

I began to weep as I started to climb down. And then I stopped.

From the door of the audience hall came the polite command of the Number One Boy.

"Ching! Please come in!"

My father, then, was in the audience hall at the end of the courtyard; and the servants, yelling at the top of their voices when the Number One Boy gave the signal, were bidding the officials come in and see my father. Instantly entire decorum possessed the solemn courtyard where my father transacted most of Her Majesty's business. I even forgot my tears, until after the visitors had filed obsequiously into the audience hall, each preceded by a red card about a foot square, which was the calling card of the particular visitor whom it preceded in the hand of his servant.

Then my tears came back and I came swiftly down to the courtyard. I have no doubt now, looking back, that these men had weighty business to discuss with Father, but to me that meant little, because I had been sorely wounded. Big feet, indeed!

So I followed, crying angrily, at the heels of the officials, and ran to my father even as the officials gathered around to perform the ceremony of greeting him. Then, when I had captured my father's attention, and the attention of all the officials present, I pointed to the man who had talked about me, and blurted out:

"Father! That man said I had big feet! What did he mean?"

My father was very grave about it. He did not scold me, did not send me away with sharp words. No, my father knew all about broken hearts, because, perhaps,

he had seen so many folks whose hearts had been broken. Nor did he rebuke the man who had spoken, who, by the way, had suddenly become very uncomfortable. Father gathered me to him, and spoke to me, loud enough for the officials to hear.

"Daughter," he told me, "you know how your *amah* walks, so awkwardly, swaying on her tiny feet as though they were so soft she could not stand upon them, well, she is a Chinese, and the Chinese girls have their feet broken, and bound tightly, while the girls are very small, so that when the girls grow up their feet haven't grown at all. But you, my child, are a Manchu, and the Manchus do not bind the feet of their girls. Your feet are as small, and as dainty, as the feet of any child, and they will always be small and dainty, though they will be your natural, unbroken feet!"

To cover the awkward silence which followed, though of course I did not recognize the awkwardness of it then, the man who had accused me of having big feet spoke:

"Have you other children, Yü Keng?"

Of course he didn't say it this way exactly, but I am deleting those oracular circumlocutions of Chinese conversation which may prove boresome to the Westerner.

My father nodded proudly.

The man went on:

"We would like to see them!"

It is a custom, when callers ask for the children, for

the children to be sent for; then they must appear in their very best clothing to greet the visitors to the master of the household. So my father hurried me away, and gave orders for his children to appear at once before his visitors.

So for the third time that day I was given into the hands of the *amah* to be dressed; and this time the padded gown was not used—but that hideous red ribbon remained to keep my lovely black hair unlovely!

Then my father's children—there were four of us—were hurried to the audience hall, which we entered like little soldiers on parade, lined up facing the visitors, and performed the kowtows decreed by custom to honored guests, going down to our knees and touching our heads to the floor, the red ribbons on our topknots most plainly in evidence to me before the eyes of the visitors.

Then the visitors, after we had completed the kowtows and stood erect once more, gave us each ten Chinese dollars, an act of courtesy which I did not understand at that time. And, taking another step in that destiny of mine, speaking unbidden as always, I asked a question out of curiosity.

"But what did you buy of us?" I asked.

Of course they did not understand why I had asked the question, any more than I had understood the gifts. Patiently then my father explained.

How could I guess that all these words of mine, which

proved that I had been reared, so far, unlike Chinese children, might just possibly do injury to my father? Yet, with all my prattle which might have done him harm, my father never lost patience with me.

If all fathers so surely understood their children, humanity would never perhaps have thought of Heaven!

III

THE FOREIGN-DEVIL DOLL

My father was a big man, with shoulders broad enough to bear the burdens of many who needed his help—and even then there was room upon them to sustain the cares of his household, and as comforting place for his four children. There was plenty of room on either of them for one small Manchu child of six years to perch precariously, one short arm encircling Father's head, dragging his cap askew, which always seemed for some strange reason to amuse him immensely.

A big man physically, yet not fat, with a fine sense of humor, always given to belittling even the biggest trouble—and my own troubles were always big and important ones! He wore a beard which was rather straggly, a tuft of gray growing from beneath his lower lip and hanging over his chin, and an uneven moustache, below a strong nose flanked by piercing, wise eyes.

He understood the biggest problems of state, and he understood the tiny heart of a child. He overlooked his own troubles, and tried to smooth out the troubles of others. He understood things!

That's why Her Majesty, the great old Empress Dowager of China—

But that is to anticipate. I find it rather difficult to go back to Sha-Ssu, where I first really began to know my father, Yü Keng; but as I go back there comes to mind the slave girl of my childhood, and of my girlhood, a creature that even now seems like a creature out of a nightmare, a girl who was to me what Li Lien Ying, the famous court eunuch of my later memories, was to His Majesty Kwang Hsu.

The girl's name was Hung Fang, and she had been sold as a slave into my father's household as a child, before I was born. Her parents had sold her for twenty-six Chinese dollars. When I reach that point in my story where memories are coherent, she was the housekeeper at Sha-Ssu, and the bane of existence of four Manchu children who looked like toy balloons. How well I remember her, and how she managed to have her own way!

"Tai Tai!"

When she came to us with something for us to do, or with some complaint to make, she always began with the words *"Tai Tai,"* meaning "mistress," the title by which we knew our mother. In a Manchu household *Tai Tai* is ruler supreme, as in a Chinese household; and when the children heard the words, no matter how they came, or from whose lips, the children must cease whatever they were doing, and stand to receive instructions, which must be obeyed without question, because the instructions came from *Tai Tai*. Respect to parents was the prime rule of life in Manchu and Chinese homes.

We would stand, while Hung Fang the slave girl, her face a picture of smug satisfaction and meanness—I can find no other word for it, even now!—thought things over and planned on what next to say. She had captured our attention with mention of "*Tai Tai*," and whatever she said thereafter was as though it came from my mother through her own lips.

"*Tai Tai* wishes you to do this, Der Ling! *Tai Tai* says you must not do that! I told *Tai Tai* that you were naughty, and she says you must be punished!"

There was no appeal from the abuses of this custom. We could not even check the statements of the slave girl, to ascertain whether the instructions actually came from Mother. Hung Fang had obviated that by mentioning *Tai Tai*, and there was no appeal. I often wondered how many times we obeyed the whims of Hung Fang, who forced obedience with the name of *Tai Tai*!

I admit, though it doesn't sound nice, that I hated Hung Fang with a deep and bitter hatred, for I suppose I knew, subconsciously, that she often forced us to do things, obey instructions of *Tai Tai* which *Tai Tai* knew absolutely nothing about. In a way, because of this custom which forbade questioning of the source of instructions preceded by mention of *Tai Tai*, we four children were in turn slaves, after a fashion, of the slave girl Hung Fang. Suffice it that she used, and abused, her privilege to the utmost. Perhaps she was bitter because she was a slave; perhaps she should not be blamed

for taking out her spite on us; but what had four children to do with conditions in which the purchase of slaves was possible?

Right or wrong, Hung Fang has always been for me the Chinese equivalent for "nightmare."

And this recalls once more an episode out of my childhood, which will illustrate the goodness of heart of my father, Yü Keng.

There was a goldfish bowl—a huge one—and there was a doll which a kind friend had sent me. The doll was either American or English, I've forgotten which, but its features were neither Chinese nor Manchu.

And the goldfish bowl?

It was very old, dating back to the Sung Dynasty they told me, and almost priceless. The Chinese had the belief that new bowls still held the fire which had shaped them, and that new bowls burned the goldfish, causing them to die. But this old Sung bowl, a huge thing of rare beauty, had cooled for a thousand years, and all the fire had gone out of it, making it a little heaven for goldfish, without which no Chinese or Manchu home really deserves the name.

That Sung bowl was the apple of Father's eye; and his friends and visitors often admired it, and listened as he raptly explained how he came to possess it.

Then someone sent me that doll!

It was given me while I was standing close to the Sung bowl, and Hung Fang happened to be standing

close beside me when the package was opened, and the doll given into my hands.

Of course our family, which even then had traveled widely, could see no harm in a doll with an Occidental face; but Hung Fang was a Chinese, with all the Chinese belief of the time in the evil fortune which hovered perpetually about "foreign devils." As soon, therefore, as Hung Fang had opportunity, she snatched the doll from my arms.

"You mustn't have this doll!" she snapped at me. "It is a foreign-devil doll, and it will bring you nothing but misfortune! You must throw it away, burn it, or otherwise destroy it!"

"But, Hung Fang," I objected, "when we were in Europe I always had dolls with foreign faces, and nothing evil descended upon our household! Why should ill luck descend upon us here in China, when it never came before?"

"Hush!" cried Hung Fang. "I shall tell *Tai Tai* that you are naughty!"

"But I want my doll!" I screamed.

"You shall not have it!" replied Hung Fang angrily.

But I was determined to have it, and I hated Hung Fang more than I feared her. I flew at her like a little cat, striving to regain possession of my treasure. But she held it beyond my reach, and, when the noise of our altercation began to attract attention of the other servants, and there was a good opportunity for members

of the family to put in an appearance, Hung Fang defeated all my efforts by throwing the doll into the Sung bowl!

She ran away then, laughing at me, rather nastily, I thought. I ran to the Sung bowl. It was on a stand which was quite high, and the top of the bowl was broad. No matter how I stretched my short arms, no matter that I brought all sorts of absurd things to stand on, I could not reach the doll, and to this day I don't know whether I was more heartbroken than angry. But my doll was lost, and I wished to have her.

Then the idea came.

I ran into the courtyard, found a stone I could lift and carry, and hurried back to the room where the Sung bowl was. I lifted the rock and crashed it into the bowl, which broke into many pieces, as though it had been struck by a rifle bullet. Water poured onto the floor like a flood, in the midst of which the goldfish floundered and gasped for air.

I had ruined the priceless Sung bowl, and had put the lives of many goldfish in jeopardy, but I had recaptured my foreign-devil doll!

Naturally, the noise and racket brought everybody in the household to the scene, where I hugged the bedraggled foreign-devil doll to my bosom, weeping in a mixture of joy and sorrow—joy for the doll regained, sorrow for the bowl which could not be replaced.

There were many discussions as to what should be



"IT IS A FOREIGN-DEVIL DOLL, AND IT WILL BRING YOU NOTHING BUT MISFORTUNE!"

done with me, and I was finally taken to my father, Yü Keng, who took me on his knees and very patiently told the little six-year-old of my dreams about the utter pricelessness of the Sung bowl.

He did not punish me with whippings, he was not cross to me; and, while his kind words cut me deeply, they at the same time salved the wounds made by Hung Fang and caused the sun to shine once more.

I can see now that what I have to tell sounds very much as though I were talking of myself alone; but it cannot be helped. My father and I were one—"pals"—and I am *compelled* to talk about myself in order to show my right to picture the greatest man of all my experience.

Not only to me, his favorite child, was he kindness and understanding personified, but to all with whom he came in contact; and many years later, when I was at Her Majesty's court, and many denunciations against my father came to court, this very understanding stood him in good stead, for Her Majesty even refused to investigate the alleged misconduct charged against my father, and filed the written charges away—which was tantamount to destroying them, or returning them unread.

IV

THROUGH THE TEAKWOOD PANELS

IT was the almost insatiable curiosity of my childhood which gave me so much knowledge of my father, and today it is really no great feat of memory to look back to Sha-Ssu, where he was Inspector of *Likin* and already an official of the first class, allowed to wear the peacock feather and the red coral button on his cap.

However, he wore neither of these during the visit I am going to tell about, and which I saw through the teakwood panels of the hall of audience at Sha-Ssu. I never tired of watching visitors come and go, and I somehow always managed to see without myself being seen.

The hall of audience was magnificent! It was a long hall done in teakwood, natural color, and all the furnishings were blue, while the panels were scrolled with all sorts of figures I never tired of trying to decipher and understand. To me the dragons and the figures in old gowns, done by the hands of artists, were very real; and there were even times when, alone in the audience hall, where I had no business at all, I held imaginary conversations with these scrolled figures out of China's legendry, passing the time away until visitors came, and

I could give my curiosity something alive upon which to feast itself.

It was the Magistrate of Sha-Ssu who came on this particular morning to discuss business with my father. He was ushered into the hall, passing through the doors cut in the panels which formed the partitions dividing the hall into three rooms, and opened for the visitor to pass through to wait for my father, Yü Keng. I had already taken my place behind the nearest teakwood panel, where I could hear and see, without being heard or seen—for visitors never failed to fascinate me.

He was an obese man, the Magistrate, and the responsibilities of his position were in themselves a separate and distinct responsibility.

I watched this man when he had been left alone in the hall to await the coming of Father. It was really fascinating to watch the visitors when they thought themselves alone, with no eyes to see them, and my greatest delight was to study them off guard. It was no small favor to be received by my father, an official of the first rank; and most men who came to see him appreciated this fact, especially in his presence.

I can see the Magistrate plainly, even to this day, as he sat there cross-legged, glancing around almost furtively at the furnishings of the teakwood hall and the panels, which could slide entirely back, making one great room of the hall, or could be partially opened to provide doors for the visitors to pass through to the

formal *kong* where Father would receive them, or could be entirely closed to shut off any or all of the three rooms.

And I saw, and appreciated, the furnishings of that room as well as did the old-fashioned Magistrate who came that particular morning. The scrolls and fret-work on the teakwood panels, the drawings on the walls and ceiling beams, the cushions of blue, with many and glorious "trimmings"—a word I used in those days to explain intricate designs on walls, cushions, and panels for which I could find no names—the blue furniture. A most restful and solemn place, that hall of audience in Sha-Ssu. In later years I was to know halls of audience far more resplendent, but none which were destined to remain so firmly fixed in my memory.

The Magistrate devoured these furnishings with his eyes, and I was sure that he missed no slightest detail, and that he could have told to a copper cash the exact cost of every item. I did not notice especially how the Magistrate was dressed, taking it for granted that, be he never so grand and glorious, my father's raiment would cast his best into the shade.

But what impressed me most in the Magistrate, sitting with his legs crossed, was that the leg which was off the floor was never still—a Chinese characteristic, I suppose you might call it, which is called to the minds of those who know, when China, and Chinese, are mentioned. The Magistrate sat there, jiggling that free leg without

pause, until he made one think of the dog who had no tail, and had to wag his whole body. The man's whole body seemed a bundle of nerves, until I almost caught myself aping him, as I would later when I went forth from my study room to play. For, like children everywhere, we were mimics, aping the gestures, the tones of the voices, of the men and women who came under our notice.

Then the man uncrossed his legs and crossed them again the other way, and for a moment was still. Then the other leg began to move, faster and faster, until the big tail once more wagged the dog! Then, to make matters worse, he uncrossed his legs entirely, placed both feet solidly on the floor, and was still again for all of a second. Then his knees started to move back and forth, to and from each other. The Magistrate was like an aged Southern mammy at a spinning wheel. I wondered if he ever got tired. It was all I could do to keep from giggling as I watched, and perhaps I *did* giggle. I wouldn't say that anything was impossible to that little six-year-old Manchu girl of Sha-Ssu!

After a time, our Number One Boy entered the outer door and stood just inside, and I knew, and the Magistrate knew, that Father was coming, and that the meeting was to take place immediately. That was the signal, and the fidgeting of the Magistrate ceased as though the invisible hands which had manipulated the strings had stilled their activity.

Then entered the commanding figure of my father, Yü Keng, whom I can see most plainly.

He wore a dark red long gown, topped by a plum colored coat which was just a few inches shorter than the gown itself, the ensemble making him look even larger, broader shouldered, more dignified and commanding than he really was.

His head was covered by a cap called *kun chiu*, a round thing which made one somehow think of Russia of the days of the Czar, and which was used for informal meetings such as this one was. He wore trousers underneath his coat and gown, trousers which were thrust down inside black satin boots whose tops reached to just below his knees. How many things Father used to carry in those boots! It was something like the silk hat of the magician's repertoire, from which he was always producing odds and ends to amaze those who watched him—especially a little inquisitive girl who watched the whole thing breathlessly from behind the teakwood panels!

Father's trousers were thrust down inside the boots, and allowed to bag around the knees above the boots, thus adding to the impression of something out of Russia. When Father walked, and the gown, slit at the sides, gaped open with his long strides, I could plainly see the blue silk of the trousers, the black satin boots and—all in all my father was to me a figure that was "simply grand."

On the breast of the plum colored coat was the "mandarin square" which indicated Father's rank. It was simply a square in which a stork—a glorious creature, wrought in gold and silver by the hands of masters of embroidery, whose long neck was extended, whose head¹ was turned slightly, whose eyes gleamed with the light from the sun at which the stork was looking, as though greeting the morning—stood sedately in his place, moving only when Father moved, seeming really alive when Father breathed.

He was a really wonderful creature, that stork, and I had many names for him, secret names which I told to no one, save my father, who was always amused with, but never laughed at, my childish fancies.

Hanging about my father's neck was the string of amber beads, one hundred and eight in all, known as "mandarin beads," having religious significance of which I knew nothing.

And so my father came to meet his visitor, while a popeyed, intensely curious little Manchu child missed no single move from behind the teakwood panels, and watched with bated breath the unrolling of some of the intricacies of Old China courtesies—which today are sadly lacking, alas!

First, the visitor turned toward the *kong* at the end of the room and dropped to his knees to perform the kowtow decreed by custom, thanking his host in advance for his hospitality. He didn't exactly kowtow to

Father, but rather toward the wall against which the *kong*—couch, or narrow bed—rested. The Magistrate touched his head against the floor in this kowtow, as though Father had been the Emperor or somebody equally great and grand. But there was this difference: since Father was neither the Emperor, nor somebody equally great and grand, it was the custom for him to return the kowtow.

Then the servant came in with tea, while Father and his visitor stood beside the *kong*, across the center of which was arranged a small table from which tea was to be taken.

The servant brought the tea. Instantly the servant took a cup and served my father, who immediately passed his cup to his visitor, thus mutely telling the Magistrate that the house was his. In order to return the compliment, the visitor must take a second cup, and serve the host! But my father's servants were well trained. While Father was passing his own cup to the visitor, the servant placed a second cup for Father, thus preventing the visitor from completing the ceremony. This was the very acme of politeness, and in the ritual of social intercourse, meant simply this:

"My house is yours freely, and no pay is expected for what I give you!"

I wonder if the Westerner comprehends that courtesy, and how much the highborn of Old China could say without speaking their thoughts in words! One could

write whole books on these rituals, and their meanings, which had been handed down from generation to generation for centuries, until one almost forgot the meanings and performed the rituals subconsciously, while discussing the weather, that internationally favorite topic when people are at loss what to say.

Then the men seated themselves, on the *kong*, one on either side of the little table across the center of the *kong*, the visitor on the left, which was always higher than the right, and thus accorded the visitor greater honor.

Dawdling over their tea endlessly, while a little Manchu girl strained her eyes and ears to see and hear, they discussed the weather from every possible angle until the subject was most completely exhausted; then they swung into business in general, and discussed *that* from every possible angle, after which, at long last, they arrived at the business at hand, and talked all around the subject before touching on the exact matters which had inspired the visit in the first place. Slow you say? A waste of time? Agreed, but just to watch and to listen were fascination in plenty for a child of six; and it was really marvelous how much was accomplished in visits of this kind, and how gracefully and elegantly everything was done.

My father and his visitor always increased in stature, to me at least, the more polite they became as the visit moved forward to the inevitable end.

And the end was managed by signals.

The servant entered the outer door, holding one of those huge red calling cards which informed my father that another visitor was waiting and told the present visitor that it was time for him to make his lengthy preparations for departure. Sure that the signal had been seen and understood, the visitor arose.

A servant came to take the tea things, which was also part of the ritual, signaling to the visitor a second time that it was time to go. No offense was taken by the visitor; for these things were ritual, remember, as immutable as the laws of the Medes and Persians.

I poised on tiptoe, preparing to flee, as I saw the visit move forward, sure step by sure step, to its foregone conclusion, in which each actor played his part without prompting, because each knew it through years of practice, after centuries of inheritance. From my father and his visitors, Westerners could easily learn how to free themselves of guests who stay too long!

The last act in the meeting was simply this: Father extended the teacup to his visitor as a final act of politeness, and the visitor received it, lifted the lid slightly with his two free fingers, and drank tea from beneath the lid, and over the lip of the cup, with a loud sipping sound which also was a part of the ritual. This drinking noise proved to my father that the visitor had enjoyed his visit, and liked his tea above and beyond any he had previously imbibed!

So the audience was over, and, with many genuflections and handshakings with self on the part of both men, the Magistrate took his departure—preceded on the run by a little Manchu girl who understood the ritual, had been poised to await the ending of the meeting, and now scurried away at top speed to escape discovery!

For if one were discovered, and forbidden to come again to hide behind the teakwood panels, how could one reasonably expect to be an interested spectator at future meetings of state?

THOSE TERRIBLE MANCHUS

I WAS now to learn a number of things I had never known or even guessed were true. They had to do, principally, with the difference between Chinese and Manchus, and the knowledge came to me in this wise:

The Magistrate referred to lived in a big house next door, and there was of course the inevitable gossip tossed back and forth through open gates, over garden walls, by the servants of my father, Yü Keng, and the servants of the Magistrate.

The Magistrate had paid a visit to Father, and the servants of the Magistrate regarded this portentous visit as a breaking of the ice, an opening of the doors, the razing of walls between the two households.

"May we come in and play with your children? Our master has visited your master, and they parted friends, so it will be all right."

Thus spoke the servants of the Magistrate, as they appeared at our gate with the Magistrate's children, of whom I remember but one, and he the most important, because he wore a stiff pigtail, and because he was seven years old, about my own age, and our servants—Father's and the Magistrate's—were inclined to be matchmakers.

Our servants, dying to gossip with anyone, even the servants of the Magistrate, bade the servants of the latter enter, and the servants then congregated to gossip, leaving the children to play with us.

That seven year old boy with the queue! Even now I cannot forbear a smile as I remember.

His head was shaved, save for a sort of topknot in the very center, from which protruded a queue that stood almost straight up, and the first thought that came to my mind as I regarded this boy was that his queue was just the right length to accommodate a laying on of hands! I thought of a number of ways of working my will upon this boy, and would probably have tried one of them had it not been for the words of the servants later, which made me hate that boy too much to abuse him. But at the time I had the absurd idea that I would like to swing by my knees from a low limb under which he was passing, reach down and grasp his queue, lift him free of the ground, and swing him back and forth, if for nothing more than to give him the surprise of his seven years of life.

But the servants spoiled that. I could always hear everything that was said around me, and no words of anyone escaped my keen little ears, and the servants didn't in the least attempt to lower their voices.

"You know," began one of the Magistrate's servants, "our master has called on your master, and they are friends. Now he has this girl, whose face isn't at all

ugly, and master has this son, who is quite good-looking; I wonder if they will arrange a marriage between the two?"

My *amah* pondered the matter for a full minute before replying, while I hung on her words with terrific interest, with not the slightest idea, but with much curiosity, as to what it meant, and what my *amah* would answer.

"No," she said at length, "I think it is quite impossible. You see, our master is of the first rank, while your master is only a Magistrate; and marriages like this must be arranged between people whose parents are of the same rank. If your master were of the same rank as our master, or of greater rank, it would probably come about quite naturally. For Der Ling is reaching the age where some thought must surely be given the matter. But—no, the child of your master will not do!"

Thus did my *amah* dispose of the matter with grim finality as, I doubt not, she would have disposed of the pressing business of all the world, had she had the opportunity. But she had committed a sort of sin, in that she had spoken of the rank of these servants' master; and the folk from the Magistrate's household could never allow the insult to pass unchallenged.

The *amah* for the seven year old thought for a moment, seeking a reply that would be sufficiently crushing.

"Come to think of it," she said, "our master probably wouldn't hear to the match at all!"

"And why not?" demanded my *amah*, instantly up in arms at the implied obstacle.

"Because your master is only a Manchu!"

"And what has that to do with arranging a marriage between this boy and Der Ling?"

"Because she is a Manchu, too, and she has big feet!"

There it was again! What was the meaning of this continual reference to big feet? Why were my feet big? What had big feet to do with the matter, anyway? And what were Manchus? Why did the fact that one was a Manchu—whatever that was—make one impossible as a bride? Not that I understood brides and marriage then, because neither meant anything to me; but I was eager to know wherein I failed to measure up as a prospective wife, whatever that was, for this child with the pigtail which would just have fitted my two hands.

Then I suddenly found that I couldn't understand a word the servants said, yet I knew they were speaking Chinese, which was my own language. Though I didn't know until later, they had started speaking Cantonese, which was so different from my own dialect, Pekingese, that I could catch no word; and when I tried to talk to the boy whom I wasn't good enough—because I was a Manchu—to marry, I found I couldn't understand what he said, either! It was my first experience

with the different dialects of China, that difference which has made China, down the centuries, a country composed of many countries, and thus forever ripe for discord as good nature broke itself to pieces many times against the wall of misunderstanding.

But it didn't take us long to learn, and somehow we children played together, and managed to make ourselves understood. I soon found myself using Cantonese words, while the Magistrate's children picked up a few Pekingese expressions.

And all the time, as we grew to know one another better, I wanted to pull the Magistrate's son's queue, and wondered why a Manchu wasn't the proper person to marry a Chinese.

He wasn't a very nice boy, that Magistrate's son, quite despite the fact that I hated him because his *amah* had said I had big feet, and because she had called me a Manchu, with intonation which seemed to shout aloud that the very name "Manchu" suggested terrible things.

This boy, I remember, had a very bad cold, which gave me an opportunity to have revenge upon him for my big feet, and because I was a Manchu! For when a handkerchief would have been of service, this Chinese boy nonchalantly used the sleeve of his gown!

When he did that I suddenly burst into joyous laughter! It wasn't dignified to laugh, I knew, but I couldn't help it. How I hated that boy! It relieved my seething feelings to laugh at him.

"What are you laughing at?" sternly demanded the *amah* who attended the Magistrate's son.

"He's using his sleeve for a handkerchief!" I cried, jumping up and down and pointing the finger of scorn and accusation.

"Here," said the *amah* impatiently, coming forward, "you mustn't use your sleeve! Here, let me show you how to do it!"

Meekly the boy smoothed out his sleeve, and held up his rather dirty face to his *amah*, who, in a very businesslike manner, lifted the lower edge of her gown to substitute for the sleeve!

Then the *amah*, her duty performed, her face a mask of wonderment because I still was laughing, went back to her gossip, which was resumed in the Pekingese dialect, which I understood.

"Besides," she said, "the match wouldn't be proper in other ways. The main objection, of course, is that she is a Manchu; but, even so, she might be acceptable, if she had Chinese ways! But she hasn't! She's almost a foreign-devil girl! She's been out of China, in some place where she must surely have been allowed to misbehave, where she most assuredly was not taught the common ordinary Chinese courtesies! She doesn't act like a Chinese girl at all. She is forward, laughs immoderately, even at her guests—and besides, what girl, of any nationality, could be acceptable with big feet?"

There were those big feet again, when I was proud of

the fact that my feet were small! I would assuredly talk this grave matter over with Father, ask him all about big feet, and why Manchus were believed by the Chinese to be such impossible people—their girls unfit for marriage to Chinese!

Somehow I managed to contain myself in patience until I could catch the ear of my father. I waited with fair patience, for I wanted much of his time, wherein to ask him about marriage, brides, Manchus, and big feet, but it seemed like an age before I found myself with him. I was fairly bursting with the questions to which I simply must have answers.

"Why have I big feet?" I asked him, my lips trembling to keep back the tears.

"I told you," said my father softly, "the Manchus never bound the feet of their girl-children, and your feet are the natural feet with which you were born."

"But what are Manchus, and why am I one of them? Why are they such hateful people? Why don't the Chinese like them? Why aren't Manchus Chinese?"

Very patiently then my father explained.

"The Manchus," he said, "are a totally different race from the Chinese. Nobody really knows where they came from, or exactly who they are, except that they are not Chinese. Even their language is different though, alas, it is rapidly being forgotten as the years pass and the Manchus remain in China, accepting her tongue and her customs, forgetting their own. Mythology has it

that a girl was swimming in a river far beyond the White Mountains, many, many years ago, and that she saw a very red berry floating on the surface of the stream. She ate the berry, the story says, and became the mother of the first Manchu! You don't understand that, of course, and it is probably just a story anyway.

"But, away back, centuries ago, the Manchus were people who wandered here and there in a place called Sungari River, living in the open, hunting and fishing, and enjoying themselves. Their children were not kept inside, like Chinese children, but were allowed to go out in the open. The women rode horseback, like the men, and boys and girls played together freely. The Manchus—whose name means "pure"—began to grow, to grow in numbers, until there were so many of them that the place they lived in was no longer big enough to hold them.

"Then one of their Emperors, a great man called Nurhachu, began to think he would like to live in China, because his people were growing so fast, increasing so rapidly in numbers, that they needed more room, more open places in which to play and frolic. The Manchus were wanderers, and, back beyond some nine hundred years ago, nobody knows just what they were, or where they came from to live along the Sungari River.

"Then great trouble broke out in China, years later, and the Emperor of the Manchus, whose tribe, or clan,

had now grown until it was huge indeed, was asked to come over into China and help the Emperor of that place, with all the beautiful Princesses and Empresses, large and small, to keep their homes and the palaces in which they lived and ruled their people.

"The man called Nurhachu never came to China himself, for this trouble about which I am telling you didn't happen until a long time later. But when the trouble came in China, and the Chinese Emperor asked the Manchu Emperor to come and help him, the Manchu Emperor was ready. The Manchus had always liked the art, and the manners, of the Chinese, and had wished to learn them for themselves, so when they were asked to come to China they were glad to come.

"The Manchu Emperor sent his warlike son to China to help the Chinese Emperor, and with that son, child, came my ancestors, who were *your* ancestors! We were a warlike people. The Chinese call us 'barbarians,' though we aren't barbarians at all. We had a written language of our own!"

"Do I know that language, Father?" I demanded.

"No," he said slowly, "you do not! We have now been in China over two centuries, and we never speak our language any more. It is used only on official documents—"

I confess I didn't understand the story, for it all sounded so strange. I, who had always thought myself Chinese, if I may be said to have thought at all, was

a Manchu! It was too much to grasp—just as the difference between Chinese and Manchus is almost impossible for the Westerner to grasp today!

But Father continued with his strange story.

“There is too much of the story to tell you now, and you wouldn’t be able to understand it all, because you are too young. But some day I shall tell you the whole story, and you must remind me of this promise. Remember this, however: Manchus have no reason to be ashamed of being Manchus! They were a great people, and they still are; but they are not Chinese. The Chinese hate us, yet we are their masters! Perhaps we won’t always be, but—well, I’ll tell you the whole story when you are old enough to understand!”

So mastering my curiosity, realizing that Father would tell me all when he felt I should know, I relied upon him, as always, to do as he had said he would do. But I wondered, as he sent me away, whether I would be big enough, and old enough, to hear the rest of the story tomorrow!

I couldn’t realize, of course, that the story, when it was entirely told, would be emphasized by sorrow and heartbreak.

VI

GREEN BROADCLOTH

OUR home at Sha-Ssu was turned into a sort of bedlam which I could not understand, but which puzzled me most mightily. I asked people to tell me what was happening, and the consensus of opinion was that it could be of no possible interest to me, and that I was too young to understand.

Servants were scurrying here and there amid a general atmosphere of tension and excitement.

The first person I asked about the hurry and bustle was Hung Fang, the slave girl.

"What is happening?" I asked her.

"Mind your own business!" she told me tartly.

But my curiosity was too great to allow the matter to end with a curt command like this from a slave girl, especially from one as mean, and whom I hated as much, as Hung Fang.

I asked everybody what was happening, and nobody told me. Then I thought that Father himself would be glad to tell me, since he never told me that anything was none of my business, and when he said I was too young to understand, I always believed him. For my father never fooled me.

I went to his office. He had visitors, and the faces of all of them were very grave. This filled me suddenly with a vague sort of fear, which was in no wise lessened when I heard one of the visitors say to my father:

"But you are taking your life in your hands—and all for the benefit of a few dead foreign missionaries, and some live ones who have been taken prisoner! Why bother about them? For my part, I'd like to see all foreigners in China either killed or driven out!"

"It is not the fault of the missionaries themselves that they are here!" said my father sharply. "They are sent out by their own countries, and have to come here whether they wish or no. It is our duty, as long as they are here, to see that they are properly treated. I don't believe that any foreigners have a right to come here and teach us a religion we may not want, but if they do come, and our people molest them, we should do our duty by them and see that they are protected."

"But this business at Wu Shieh is a grave matter," protested the speaker, "and, if you side with the foreigners, the people who killed some of them and captured the others will feel that you are in league with the foreigners, and may treat you even worse than the foreigners were treated!"

While I listened to this strange conversation with all my ears, wondering what in the world was meant by it, and why my father was going to be in danger, Father laughed at the fears of his visitors.

"They will not harm me," he said. "I am going. It is my duty!"

My father, then, it seemed, was leaving Sha-Ssu, for how long I hadn't the slightest idea. But for him to leave at all was to me a catastrophe. Paying no heed to his solemn visaged visitors, I dashed to my father and demanded to know what the hurry and bustle was about, and the meaning of whatever danger it was which threatened the well-being of my father, Yü Keng.

But this time my father frightened me, because he refused to tell me.

"You are too young to understand it," he said. "I am going away for a little while, but I will return and we'll be happy again together."

I wasn't satisfied, and I'm afraid that my lessons were neglected, and that I was pretty much under the feet of all the bustling, scurrying servants, during Father's preparations for departure from Sha-Ssu. I asked more questions than any one person could answer, more questions than all the members of our Sha-Ssu household *would* answer, and the sum total of knowledge gained by my questioning was simply this: My father was going away, gloom was creeping in where happiness had been, and Father's life might be in danger.

Father, with that rare understanding which was always his, saw how it was with me, and brightened the world temporarily by telling me that he would take me with him in his sedan-chair to the steamer which was

taking him away to Wu Shieh, wherever that was. Mother didn't like the idea of my going to the steamer, advancing the objection that Father's servants would simply be put to the trouble of bringing me home again. But we had other sedan-chairs, many of them, at our home, and Father persisted quietly in his intention of taking me with him to the river where he was to take the boat.

How well I remember that journey! For I sat on Father's knees and looked through the windows of the sedan-chair at Sha-Ssu as we passed through to the steamer.

Father's chair was an ornate thing, with all the lavish decorations his rank merited. It was carried by four sedan-chair coolies, and the crew was composed of eight boys who carried the chair in shifts. The outer walls of the chair were of green broadcloth, and there were glass windows in each of the four sides. The lower edge of the sedan itself was bordered in red, while the upper edge, under the roof, was resplendent with black tassels which swung back and forth and seemed to dance merrily with the swaying and jolting of the chair. The coolies were dressed in blue coats, blue trousers, black felt caps adorned with bright red tassels, and wore heel-less black felt boots.

In addition to the coolies who actually carried the chair, there was a head coolie who ran alongside the chair, his right hand on one of the mahogany stained

poles. This man's duty was to carry important documents Father was taking with him, and to supervise the chair coolies. Ahead of the chair ran a coolie who carried a red umbrella on the end of a long handle. This umbrella was a signal to all who saw it that an official of high rank followed right behind and that they must make way.

So I took a trip by sedan-chair through the narrow streets of Sha-Ssu, streets that were always wet and slippery because water was carried from the river in buckets swung on the ends of poles across coolie shoulders, and, no matter how careful the coolies, water was always sloshed over onto the cobblestones. These cobblestones were huge things, and spaced very unevenly, so that it was really a task for the chair-coolies to do their duty.

I can hear those coolies now!

"Wa!" said the coolies who carried the forward end of the chair. The word in itself meant nothing, except that it was probably the simple jargon of the coolies themselves, which no one else was supposed to understand; and, while the word had no real meaning, as a word, it did convey the following meaning to the coolies who carried the rear end of the chair in which Father sat with me on his knees:

"Hole in the road! Cobblestone missing! Watch your step!"

And as soon as the coolies ahead had shouted their "wa," the coolies behind made answer:

"Ugh!" which meant nothing either, as a word, but which might have been interpreted as follows:

"I heard you! I am watching!"

The streets of Sha-Ssu, besides being inexcusably rough, almost impassable, were very narrow, and the sun seldom shone in the streets of the little town because the housewives and *amaks* of the place all hung their washings out of their windows, over the street, on bamboo poles, so many of them that the sun could not have shone through had it tried. I never missed a single thing on that ride through Sha-Ssu, for I enjoyed every minute of it, even though Father was leaving, and his life was in danger. The "wa" and the "ugh" of the chair coolies, the swaying and jouncing of the chair, with Father's arms holding me securely, thrilled me to the very heart. Nor did anything escape my eyes as I looked through the windows—ahead at the blue sashed, grand looking chair coolies, to right and left at the poverty stricken houses of Sha-Ssu, to the rear at other blue garbed coolies, and the winding, rough, uneven street over which we had passed.

I was very proud of my father, too, as the crowds in the street gave way for us to right and left. The crying of peddlers with things to sell came plainly through. A blind beggar tapped his way along the rough cobblestones. A barber plied his trade on a corner. Water carrying coolies went to and fro, some with empty buckets en route to the river, some with buckets which

wouldn't be so full when they reached their destinations because, in spite of pieces of board on the surface of the water, they managed to splash the cobblestones plentifully, making them even more slippery if that was possible.

The red umbrella bobbing ahead there. The grunts of the chair-coolies. The swerving of the chair to avoid ruts, sometimes abruptly, making me thankful for my father's arms.

And on this ride I learned something that amused me very much.

On the bamboo poles thrust forth from windows, bearing the laundry of the townspeople, there often were pairs of trousers. These were held up by the pole thrust through one leg, allowing the other to hang down crazily, as though the occupant were spreadeagled. I noticed that we never passed exactly under these trousers, and that often a servant would run ahead and rake down a whole family's washing with a long pole apparently made for just that purpose. I asked my father the reason.

"It is considered very bad fortune to pass underneath anybody's trousers hung out to dry, especially if the trousers be those of a woman!"

That sounded very funny to me, and it must have been funny to Father, too, for he smiled when he told me, and continued:

"It's very foolish, of course, and I don't believe in that

sort of bad fortune, and neither must you; but the coolies believe in it faithfully, and it is useless to try to dissuade them! So they either avoid passing under anybody's trousers, or, if they can't avoid passing under, they take the trousers down before we reach them!"

Father told me many things on that trip. As I remember it now, he must have been trying rather desperately to keep me from thinking of the fact that he was leaving—as though that had been possible!—but what he said was interesting, as was everything he ever said to me. He pointed out the dikes of Sha-Ssu, beyond which the surface of the river was higher than the town, thus placing it perpetually in danger from flood. He told me the meaning of the various designs on the sedan-chair, why an official of the first rank was allowed four bearers, while an official of lesser rank was allowed only two; told me that green broadcloth was only for the chairs of officials of the first rank, while blue was for officials of the second rank, and so on down, every bit of it interesting.

When men rode in chairs, he told me, it was permissible to keep the curtains up—padded things of blue silk—so that people could see in and the men could see out; but when women went abroad the curtains were always down, and the passenger could only peep through, lifting a corner of the curtain.

But even as Father talked, many other things were going through my mind: "foreigners," "missionaries,"

"life in danger," "foreigners killed," "in league with foreigners"—all those phrases I had caught from the lips of one of Father's solemn-faced visitors. I studied Father's face very carefully, trying to see whether he was afraid, but if he was I couldn't tell, and he probably—if later events meant anything—wasn't afraid anyway. But I was—desperately afraid that something would happen to him and that he wouldn't come back, at least for a long time.

What a bunch of baggage he took with him! He had to have changes of clothing for all sorts of important things he was supposed to do in Wu Shieh, though the things he considered the very most important were carried in a tiny trunk which servants had thrust under the high seat in the sedan-chair, and which Father would keep quite close to him all the time.

When the small trunk was under the seat, there was just enough room left for Father's favorite pet—which likewise was wildly attached to my father—a short-haired Pekingese dog. This dog always knew when Father was going anywhere, and always managed, in spite of all the servants could do—and I fancy they didn't try very hard to prevent—to get into the chair ahead of Father, and ensconce himself under the seat. So it always happened that when Father went any place for a visit, and his hosts came forth to greet him at the chair, the dog was always the first one forth, as though

he sprang out proudly to herald the approach of my father, Yü Keng.

Then we reached the river bank. The steamer was in midstream, and a sort of runway had been built out over the water to the steamer. We were carried over this rickety way, which shook perilously, and made me deathly afraid of the boiling yellow flood below, to the steamer which was to take my father away. I stayed with him to the very last minute, watched his sedan-chair placed on deck, ringed about by blue uniformed coolies.

Then he bade me good-by, and ordered the servants to take me back in the other chair which had followed along with us for that purpose. The dog, which had tried to stowaway with Father, was also sent back, and rode in my chair.

Father told me smilingly that he would be home soon, and I tried, rather bravely I thought, not to cry as long as he could see me.

But on the way back home, and after I arrived there!

I don't remember a step of the way back. I didn't hear the squealing of the pigs which always ran under the feet of the chair-coolies, and under the chair itself. I didn't see the laundry on the lines, or hear the shouts of the hucksters, or the "wa" and the "ugh" of the bearers.

I heard nothing, saw nothing, felt nothing but my

own grief—for my father, Yü Keng, had gone away, his life was in danger, and the world was a poor place in which to live anyway.

A long time later I learned that Father had done something great in Wu Shieh, something for which he had received a decoration for bravery, and a clock from the King of Sweden—because the people he had saved at Wu Shieh were Swedish.

Nothing of this interested me at the time, however, for I was a perfect little fury in my grief. I wept, I stormed, and when I could get no sympathy I caught up Father's short-haired Pekingese and squeezed him. He yelped in protest, and no wonder! I had bitten his ear in the agony of my sorrow.

VII

GOOD-BY TO SHA-SSU

I HAD always disliked Sha-Ssu. So had my father. And now we were leaving. My father, Yü Keng, had been promoted to be Provincial Treasurer of Hupeh, with residence at Wu Chang, across the river from Hankow. It was a very important post, and Father was pleased, though Mother disliked the idea of living in Wu Chang because she said it was an even worse place than Sha-Ssu. Since this was a promotion for Father, however, and too important to overlook, we were to live in Hankow, while Father was to have his offices in Wu Chang, crossing the river twice daily to be with his family.

I had always disliked Sha-Ssu, yet, now that we were leaving, I was unhappy. I was always a moody child, given much to day dreaming, and some of my own fancies will be given later in this chapter.

My father, Yü Keng, was always of the first rank, since his forbears had been those who had come to China with the first Manchu Emperor; but he could receive promotions which had nothing to do with his Manchu rank, such as this promotion from Inspector of *Likin* at Sha-Ssu, to be Provincial Treasurer of Hupeh.

When word of Father's promotion came from the Throne, there was wild excitement in our home at Sha-Ssu, which we were to leave immediately. And one little incident dwells in my mind especially, which I give here because it shows something of Chinese superstitions.

My father had scarcely received word of the promotion when he received a visit from a Chinese official whom he had visited some months before. As usual, I was where I could hear everything and see everything, and the first words of the Chinese official puzzled me exceedingly.

"You see, Yü Keng," exclaimed the visitor, "I told you so, when you visited me three months ago!"

My father looked at his Chinese friend in astonishment.

"You told me so?" he asked. "And what did you tell me? I do not remember."

"I told you you were sure to be promoted, remember? Because you broke the string which held your mandarin beads! That is always a sure sign of promotion, and I told you so at the time; and what happens within three months of the accident, and what I told you? You are promoted from Inspectorship of *Likin* at Sha-Ssu, to be Provincial Treasurer at Wu Chang!"

My father only laughed, and I confess it sounded very strange to me; but then, to a child, many things sound strange, as I recall it. And when the visitor departed I asked Father what he had meant, and Father told me:

"While I was at his place the string which holds my beads broke. The string was probably worn through, and the break was quite natural; but my friend immediately exclaimed that I was going to be promoted, and for the string of beads to break was the surest sign of promotion. It was silly of course, only a Chinese superstition, and my promotion is just a coincidence, which would doubtless have occurred even had my string of beads not broken."

I couldn't understand it, and Father couldn't make me understand; but there were many quaint Chinese customs which never meant anything to me, and their superstitions, myriad in number, beyond the power of any Manchu child to learn. All I knew about my father's beads was that there were a hundred and eight of them, and that he wore them on very formal occasions.

And so—

We were leaving, and I was really sorry—except for one thing: I was happy because I believed that when we left Sha-Ssu, we would leave my Chinese tutor behind. He was the first, after my father, I interviewed after the good news came, and I was rather frank in expressing myself.

"I certainly am glad," I told my tutor, whose life I had made thoroughly miserable, "that I am going to Wu Chang where I'll never see you again!"

"I, too, am glad you are going to Wu Chang," said

the tutor gravely, "because I believe I shall like Wu Chang better than Sha-Ssu!"

"Wha-a-a-t?" I stammered.

"Of course," he said quietly, "I am to go with you to Wu Chang! Hadn't you heard?"

I hadn't, and felt that I had been very badly treated in that I had been allowed to cherish the hope that I would lose my tutor of Chinese classics.

So I left the tutor and went into our garden, which had always somehow been my sanctuary. How many times, during our stay at Sha-Ssu, had I slipped away to our garden to brood over things I didn't understand, and to be alone with my childish dreams! Dreams which, now that I analyze them, were very much like the dreams which come to me even now, now that Sha-Ssu is far behind me, and Father has been gone for many years.

What a glorious garden it was! I never tired of wandering its labyrinthian ways, of treading slowly along the winding walks, bearding imaginary ogres and dragons in the gaping holes in the rockeries without which no Chinese or Manchu garden is complete. In the spring, when the trees were in bloom, I would stand for hours, watching their beauty, and wondering if the trees had souls or hearts, and if they could think, as I did. Above all, I wondered if the trees would miss me when I didn't come back, if the walks would sorrow because I walked across them no more, if the rockeries

would pine because I never came back to them, seeking ogres and dragons to engage in conversation. And after the blooms fell from the trees, during that brief period before the leaves came out, I was wont often to feel sad as I looked at the bare arms of the trees, all glistening silver with morning dew, and wondered if the trees were sad.

"Will the trees miss me?" I asked myself. "Will the leaves which have whispered when I stole into the garden to stare at Father's visitors, whisper after I am gone, and will they miss me? Will they whisper just the same for some other little girl who wears a queue with a hideous red ribbon, and who looks like a toy balloon gone a-walking?"

How many times I had gone walking in the garden! How many times I had sat and mooned, wondering about the trees, and whether they had a language of their own, and how many times Hung Fang, the slave girl, had caught me in my reveries, and had driven me away with threats to tell *Tai Tai* that I was queer, moody, and melancholy!

I remember when the blooms were falling from the trees, and someone told me the blooms would wither and die on the ground. While I knew nothing about death and burial, the falling of the blooms had always filled me with sadness, and Hung Fang had once caught me in the act of digging little graves for the fallen blooms, and burying them with all the sad solemnity

which would have been that of older persons at the funeral of loved ones. I never understood why I buried the dead blossoms, and do not know to this day. I only know that something, a sad, sad something inside the moody little girl that I was at six, impelled me to bury the blossoms, and so I buried them—and Hung Fang, the slave girl, who knew nothing of sentiment, drove me away with threats to tell *Tai Tai* that I was queer!

We were leaving Sha-Ssu, which I had always disliked, and I was bidding mute good-by to our Sha-Ssu garden, which I had always loved.

And this particular day, when the trees were in bloom, I watched them, whispering a good-by, and trying to make them promise they wouldn't forget me. I paused a long time by the garden pond, and conversed with the goldfish which swam up curiously, gaping at me with their funny little mouths, and asked them, too, if they would remember me when I had gone. I was a sad little girl who was sorely troubled and didn't know why, and nobody knew where the hurt was, or tried to sympathize. Father would have understood, perhaps, but he was so busy preparing to go to Wu Chang that I did not bother him with my troubles.

While I was walking slowly under the trees, listening to their whispering, and wondering who would bury the fallen blooms after I had gone, a saucy little bird flew in from somewhere and perched on one of the trees.

"I wonder," I asked myself, "if you are the same bird

who came last year and tried to talk to me, and if you've come today to tell me you are sorry I am going? I wonder, too, if *you* will miss me when I am gone?"

I believe from the depths of my soul that that bird understood every word, even though I did not speak aloud, for when I had propounded these grave questions, it cocked its head to one side, and regarded me very gravely. The bird said nothing, of course, but I was satisfied that it had said something, for my ears alone:

"Of course, I shall miss you, silly child! Have we not always been the best of friends? Have we not many times exchanged confidences which no one else heard or understood? I promise you faithfully that no one, be she ever so great, shall take your place!"

I was satisfied where the trees were concerned, and the goldfish and the birds, but my heart continued heavy as the time drew nearer and nearer when we must leave Sha-Ssu.

How plainly I can see that little girl in the big garden, which to her was as big as the earth in which she was a pygmy in balloon-like padded clothes, stiff queue tied with red ribbon. I was sorry for that little girl then, and today I can sympathize with her, for now that Father is gone, I am the only living person who understood her—and even I often worried about her, and wondered what was to become of her.

There was one consolation in the prospective journey to Wu Chang—Father was going, too.

Something happened just before we left Sha-Ssu which I shall never forget. We were to leave in a few hours, and these were filled with hurry and bustle.

Then came a discordant noise, the tinkling of bells, a strange chanting. In spite of the fact that Hung Fang thought it all very undignified, and forbade me, I nevertheless discovered the reason for the noise. Many people were coming along the streets of Sha-Ssu toward our courtyard, and above their heads shook and swayed two great umbrellas each with many ribbons of all different colors hanging from their edges. These umbrellas were presented to my father!

On the ribbons on those umbrellas were the names of ten thousand men, and to bestow the "Ten Thousand Men Umbrella" upon an official was a marvelous honor. Its presentation required the unanimous vote of the people who made the presentation, and it was given my father because he had always been honest with the people of Sha-Ssu.

VIII

ARGOSIES OF THE MIGHTY

As I recall it, seven days were required for the journey by houseboat from Sha-Ssu to Wu Chang. We did not go by the river, but threaded our way slowly, and in a very dignified manner, along the canals.

You must know that in China, of the old days at least, no one was ever in a hurry, as this chronicle of the memorable journey by houseboat will prove.

Eight boats were required to take our family from Sha-Ssu to Wu Chang! First, there was our houseboat, equipped with all the conveniences China of that day could muster. There were bedrooms, dining rooms, and all conveniences except bathrooms. There was a houseboat for my father's secretary and the secretary's family; there was a houseboat for our servants, and there was a flat-boat whose duty was merely to transport our sedan-chairs, which must go everywhere we went. Then there were four "gunboats" which would doubtless bring smiles to the faces of Westerners. The whole flotilla of us was much like a plaything flotilla of a small boy interested in a naval career, and gaining experience at the edge of a washtub filled to the brim!

My father's houseboat led the procession. Next came

the four gunboats—why they remained behind us rather than preceding us in case danger should loom ahead I haven't the slightest idea!—then came the secretary's boat, and the flatboat bearing the sedan-chairs, four in number, and the houseboat which bore our servants.

What a gala journey that was!

I never tired of walking on the deck of our boat—which ran smoothly, and made those who rode feel lazy and affluent—and looking off to either bank of the canal, just broad enough for boats to meet and pass, where the willow trees were lush and green, and spring-time had painted all the countryside with colors. Flowers bloomed in profusion. Farmers labored in their fields, the ugliness of the fields just now hidden by the green of springtime. The whole thing was like those pictures of China countrysides which one encounters frequently in idealistic paintings, but so seldom sees in reality. The breeze, too gentle even to stir our sails had there been any in use, brought delicious odors to our nostrils, so many and varied that the odors of the canal, and other odors which one encounters everywhere in China, were almost obliterated.

The houseboat was forced along the canal by five coolies, three on one side and two on the other—I never understood why the number was always uneven this way—who ran back and forth along the runways against the rails—or where the rails should have been, and were not. Each coolie carried a long pole. The

coolies would go to the bow of the boat, face the stern, thrust down their long poles to the canal bottom, and then walk back to the stern, thrusting heavily on their poles, forcing the boat ahead. And always it seemed as though the coolies, who often sang raucously at their labors, believed that the more noise they made with their spatting bare feet, the more successful were their labors.

Their work at least was harmonious. Up to the bow, one behind the other, trailing their poles in the water; face about together, thrust in their poles, and then *spat-spat*, *spat-spat*, against the boards of the runway, long since worn smooth by the passage of their bare feet through the years, they would pound their way back to the stern, to the end of the runway; face about together, return and start all over again. Even though the coolies on the other side of the boat could not see their friends, the two crews worked together as though all had been actuated by the same machinery, or as though all were moved by invisible strings in the hands of a single prompter.

Perhaps it was the *spat-spat* of their bare feet on the boards which made them work together, for though they kept at this work hour after hour, they never faltered, and the *spat-spat* of their feet as they forced the boat ahead sounded as automatic as the ticking of a clock.

Then those gunboats, upon whose decks it was a sure

sign of coming evil fortune for a female to set foot! They were little more than junks, narrow things which made a lot of fuss without even appearing to be formidable. Trappings to add to the dignity of the mighty! A little houselike cubby in the stern of each boat, and a long flat deck, unrelieved by other cubbies, with nothing to break the smooth lines except such impedimenta as might be piled upon the deck. And in the prow of each, a single small gun, whose muzzle was perhaps three inches in diameter, and which, intended to make the boats appear formidable, succeeded in making them appear ridiculous instead. Each boat had its captain, and they were assuredly important personages! And so dignified, especially when they stood near their guns, when we were in port, stiffly at attention to do Father honor when he went ashore to pay his respects to officials where we stopped.

The only other boat which at all interested me was the flatboat on whose deck were carried our four sedan-chairs. Above the deck of this one was a sort of lattice frame, over which a tarpaulin was drawn when rain threatened, so that our gorgeous chairs might not be spoiled.

Quietly we moved down the canal, taking our time, the miles thrust behind us by the rhythmic *spat-spatting* of the bare feet of the coolies. When mealtime came all boats anchored. Servants boarded us to prepare the

meals, and no one hurried. We would start again when Father's family had entirely finished their meals. Then the journey was resumed, a never ending voyage of surprises.

Each gunboat flew a white flag which bore Chinese characters representing my father's rank, and his name, "Yü," so that the countryside would know that Yü Keng, of the first rank, was passing through; and everywhere we went China-folk came forth to do my father honor. It was no small thing to be an official of the first rank in the days of the Empire, and my father, moreover, had just been promoted to be Provincial Treasurer of Hupeh Province, and this fact also was emblazoned on the flags of the gunboats!

How important those gunboats were! There was a tall drum on each of them, and these were beaten at all hours, sometimes to make sure that the people of the passing countryside take notice, sometimes to signal the fact that Father was going ashore to make an official visit. The drums were pounded together at nine o'clock at night, just before bedtime, and four other times during the night thus representing, I suppose, the ship's bell of more modern navies.

Around sundown, simultaneously with the beating of the four drums, the four guns on the gunboats were fired. It was interesting to watch them, and their noise did not frighten me in the least. I was intensely curi-

ous, and wondered why, after the guns were fired, some soldier so frantically thrust a pole, with a swab at the end, down the throat of each of the belching monsters. It looked very undignified, somehow, then.

Of course word always went ahead of us, as the story was hurled from mouth to mouth throughout the countryside, and, at every little town we passed, officials came to the canal and we were asked to stop so that Father could exchange the memorable courtesies with the officials.

At each place officials sent presents to my father, and always the presents were of food, in which cured hams predominated. Since Father had plenty of money, he didn't need these gifts of food, but it would have been a great breach of courtesy to refuse, no matter how politely refusal was made.

"Father," I once asked, "don't you think it's too bad we aren't poor? If we were poor, we would really need this food, it would be sent to us, and we wouldn't be compelled to buy our own!"

"You silly child," said Father, "you have so many, many things to learn! If we were very poor, there would be no presents of any kind! No houseboats, no gunboats, and no sedan-chairs! You see, strange as it may seem, when one has plenty, people give one all sorts of things one does not need; when one has nothing, even the merest necessities may be denied one!"

It all sounded very complicated then, and while to-

day it doesn't sound so complicated, it does sound terribly unfair. "To those who have shall be given. . . ."

Such pomp and ceremony as we experienced during those seven memorable days! Father never cared for display, because he had traveled widely, was well educated as the Occidental understands education, and never ceased to be amused, and oftentimes bored, over all the attention that was paid him.

But he was a Manchu official, and one of high rank, and all his days were marked by ceremony and honor, which he could no more have refused than he could have stayed the hand of death. How many times have I heard him instruct a servant to tell a visitor not to kowtow, only to see the visitor come in and kowtow instantly, as though no instructions had been given.

"Father," I once asked, "why do you send word for visitors not to kowtow? It is your right. They do you honor with the kowtow, because you are a great man. I don't understand why you object!"

My father had a good sense of humor, which bubbled forth spontaneously when he was amused, or when he liked to tease me.

"I will tell you a secret," he said, "a very deep secret. I don't wish visitors to kowtow because custom requires me to kowtow in return, and it is a very distinct effort! That is the reason why I ask visitors not to do it—and besides, it's rather a silly custom, anyway, isn't it?"

It was very amusing when Father went ashore on this

journey. His sedan-chair must precede him, and there was all the hurry and bustle at each going-ashore which I remembered had preceded our departure from Sha-Ssu. Officials met Father on shore with all the polite genuflections decreed by age-old custom, and, as Father moved from the houseboat to the bank, each of the four gunboat captains stood at attention beside his gun, looking very pompous and solemn, and just a little ridiculous. Then, after Father had stepped into his chair and had been carried away, the captains would shout orders, which never seemed to mean anything, and retire to their cubbies, where they would wait, dressed in their dressiest uniforms—of impressive blue, topped by plum colored short jackets, and black felt hats with sable tails—until Father returned, when they would come forth and stand at their guns again until he had retired into his room on the houseboat, and the officials of the village or town had withdrawn, their visit ended.

Then a loud beating of drums, and the journey was resumed.

It was during one of these stops that I learned how gunboat captains felt about females so much as setting foot on their decks. One of the boats was quite close to our own, and Father had gone aboard to talk with the captain. Here was my chance to satisfy my curiosity about the funny little gunboats, and the boats were just close enough for me to clear the space between them

with a great, for me, leap across the chasm with yellow water below. I thought and acted at the same time, and found myself aboard the gunboat, thus, according to the Chinese idea, condemning that particular gunboat to all sorts of evil fortune.

I hurried across to the captain's cubby, running to my father's protection as always. The captain, when he saw me, was very much flustered, and finally, after many gaspings and false starts, managed to tell my father about the superstition.

My father smiled at the captain, when that worthy had finished and stood eyeing me most malevolently, though I was all innocence as to my transgression.

"The prohibition may hold true with all other women and girl-children," said my father to the captain, regarding me fondly and indulgently, "but no bad luck will attend you because of the visit of my daughter; not because she is my daughter, but because she is different from all other women, and girl-children!"

A very cryptic utterance of my father, which became the keynote of all my training in the years to come. Father believed me "different," and reared me in that belief myself, so that I grew to regard the fact of my "difference" as a matter of course.

I never guessed, nor do I fancy my father did, that his transfer to Wu Chang, with his promotion, was but the first rung of a ladder which was to lead to very great

things indeed, and was to take us all to the ends of the earth—and back again—before the end came; that war clouds were gathering which were to change the whole course of destiny for some of the family, indeed for all, and to lead us all to the very foot of the throne of China's mightiest ruler.

IX

YAMEN WALLS

THERE was one way in which I differed materially from my father; he hated formality, and I loved it—when the formality was for my father's sake. While he was at Wu Chang, his family lived in Hankow, across the river, and often his children traveled across with him to his *yamen* in Wu Chang. But I went oftener than the others, because to me it was always an adventure, a journey into a wonderland where there were always adventures just around the corner, new surprises—and noise.

I never knew why it was that in bad weather, when we made the crossing in one of the three boats which belonged to the *yamen*, the boatmen always allowed the craft to drop down river, then hoisted the sails and tacked back up with the wind. I understand it now, of course, but then it seemed like a sort of miracle, because the wind drove the boat back up-river against the current.

Wu Chang wasn't a pretty place, but the *yamen* was a fairyland—at least to me.

First there were the gates through the walls, a huge central gate through which Father passed in his ornate sedan-chair, and through which important visitors

came; while on either side of the main gate were smaller gates for the use of employees and servants of various grades. The huge central gate was decorated with great red paintings of the "Gods of the Gate," glaring hideous things painted there to frighten away evil spirits. Father didn't believe in these things, but the *yamen* had been built long before my father had been born, and the paintings themselves were very old.

All the noise and bustle attendant upon Father's arrival at the *yamen*! And how my father disliked it.

"What a lot of fuss and feathers to let people know that I am coming! That noise will drive me to distraction some day!"

I frankly admit that I liked "the fuss and the feathers." It was very thrilling, and my father must have been a great man to merit all this attention. I was intensely proud of Father.

The gates swung open for his entry, borne in the swaying, bouncing sedan-chair, and right inside the gates were encountered the first of the *yamen* people, eight soldiers, garbed in black turbans, black short coats on the breasts of which were red medallions of imposing size, with the Chinese character for "soldier" emblazoned upon them, black trousers, and black boots, the whole making each individual soldier look like an executioner. Attached to the sides of the short coats were "fighting skirts," which hung down on either side, over the hips, like drooping elephant's ears.

These eight soldiers were always just inside the gate, and when Father came through in his chair, they faced one another, four on either side, and stood stiffly at attention until he had passed. When Father passed between the soldiers, the special musicians who were part of the *yamen* force, always played music, while the Chinese equivalent of the saluting gun—a piece of iron on the ground, with a hole in its center to hold the powder which was fired off—was fired three times with much noise and smoke, and odor.

Then the gates, with the hideous paintings on the outside, facing the great cleared space before the *yamen*, swung shut behind Father, and his day at the *yamen*, or "official residence," had begun. Even as early as Father arrived, there were always many people ahead of him, come to make complaints of one kind or another, to ask favors, and to make him, all in all, one of the busiest men in Wu Chang.

There were about forty servants attached to the *yamen* force, and as far as I could tell they spent most of their time standing around, trying to look busy and important. In addition to the soldiers, there were gate servants, whose duty it was to see that the crowds in the first courtyard kept order, and to announce visitors upon entry to the *yamen*. The *yamen* itself was surrounded by a high wall, so that it became the castle of the official who happened to be in charge. The *yamen* was a sort of combination home and office, and the offi-

cial was expected to live there with his family, and the fact that Mother did not like Wu Chang, or the life in a *yamen*, was the cause of much criticism of Father, who permitted his family to live across the river in Hankow, in the foreign settlements, and in a foreign house.

The *yamen* was really an imposing place, and could easily have been made quite comfortable and homelike, if that is ever possible in a place which is designed especially for business.

There was the inevitable garden, with the winding walks, the rockeries—which are simply “built up” rocks, mortared together in all sorts of shapes—goldfish ponds, and various kinds of statuary. This was the first courtyard, giving on the first building, which was a waiting room for those who wished to see my father.

Gardeners were always puttering around among the walks and the flowers, and caring for the ponds. The gardeners were a separate and distinct class of servitors, to whom we paid little attention save to assure ourselves that they understood gardening. They were judged by their labors, and most of them were worthy of their hire.

Then there was the first building, a sort of waiting room, and here the din was always terrific. People from all classes of society, who had somehow managed to convince the keepers of the gates that they really had business with Father, waited here, and talked loudly to one

another in all sorts of dialects. Each speaker tried to drown out all others, all shouted at the tops of their voices, so that it is doubtful if anyone really ever understood what was said, though the din of the conversation was just the sort of thing to please a young lady of six or seven who enjoyed noise. As with most Chinese *yamens* this one in Wu Chang was so arranged that when the central doors of the three main buildings, and the main gate which gave entry to the *yamen*, were all opened, one who stood in the street outside could see straight through the gate and all the three doors.

After the first courtyard and the waiting room, there came the second and more important building, where Father received visitors whose missions had been looked into by his representatives in the waiting room, and who had survived the weeding out process. Personally, I could never tell much difference between the crowds in the two buildings, for all talked loudly, shouting to make themselves heard above the din, and silence held sway only when Father came in to meet his visitors.

There was one thing about this second building which always intrigued me. That was a very old tree at one end of the building, about which the building had been erected. The story was that, while the *yamen* itself was at least a hundred years old, the tree was even older, and that because of an old superstition, the tree was not cut down to make room for the building, but was left there and the building erected around it, so that the

tree seemed to be growing out of the floor, and up through the roof, above which it spread its limbs like a huge umbrella over the roof of the Reception Hall. Inside the room from whose floor the tree sprang, a sort of bench had been built about the boll of the tree, so that people—our own servants and the *yamen* folk especially—could lean back against the tree if they liked, and use the bench as a tea table.

There was a peculiar story about this tree. The legend had it that, back in the long ago, the tree had been a fox, who had been changed into the tree by some weird necromancy. The humble people fully believed the story, and that if the tree ever were cut down evil fortune would fall upon the *yamen* and everyone in it, though the evil fortune would not be quite so evil in the case of an official *yamen* as it surely would have been had the tree been cut down to make room for a private residence. This legend, perhaps, had much to do with the original choice of location for the *yamen*.

Beyond the Reception Hall, on the opposite side of the *yamen* from the gate, was the official residence, which would have been our home could Mother have been persuaded to live at the *yamen* instead of in Hankow. This place was rather cold and cheerless, and it was easy to understand why Mother did not like it. The floor was of brick, and there was no way of keeping the place warm. Father used it himself as a sort of refuge against visitors who were insistent, and as a place

to retire and be alone with his thoughts—and with such people as he found congenial companions in matters other than official.

The *yamen* as a whole was to me a gorgeous place. Forty servants, and wonderful furnishings. Chinese tables, tea tables, and tables used as desks. Huge silk hangings which felt glossy and caressing to cheeks pressed against them. A palace fit for a king, but not too good for Father, who served his country with all his heart and all his soul. Gardeners in every courtyard, puttering about their myriad tasks, gatekeepers, door-men, and Father's own personal attendants, to say nothing of the gaily uniformed chair bearers, who were always at Father's beck and call in case he wished to leave the *yamen* for any reason whatsoever.

As Provincial Treasurer of Hupeh, Father was charged with the care of huge sums of money, much of which was kept in a building set aside for that purpose, cared for by a minor official who did nothing else, and who was always important, in appearance at least, with the perpetually jingling keys at his belt.

While the "government bank" was not exactly a bank as we understand the term, it did serve as a depository for untold sums of money, and, as far as my knowledge goes, a robbery of any government depository was unheard of. This, no doubt, gave rise to the rather general belief in the innate honesty of the Chinese as a nation. Many times have I seen great sums

brought into the *yamen*, all in silver coins, the whole so heavy that it bowed the backs of many coolies, for storage in the building of which Father, through the lesser official with the keys, had charge.

In connection with money, it is probably well to say here that the armored cars of the Occidental custom would have been a distinct innovation in Wu Chang—or any other Chinese city of my acquaintance—where it was not unusual for coolies to carry thousands of dollars in wheelbarrows, across a whole Province, with no guards at all, and with the money, in gold or silver ingots, or in coins, plainly exposed—and with not one person in a thousand paying the least heed to what was happening! Coolies who labored their lives away for a few copper *cash* per day with which to buy rice for themselves, their wives and a numerous progeny, could safely be trusted to manage these wealth-transporting wheelbarrows, or to carry coins or bullion in heavy sacks slung carelessly over their backs. I wonder how far such a messenger would get in many Occidental cities of my acquaintance!

Great indeed were the *yamen* officials, only less important in the eyes of the city than the court in the Forbidden City at Peking. Everything that happened at the *yamen*, garbled and distorted of course, or enlarged upon according to the story telling ability of the gossipmonger, fled on the wings of the wind, or the

tongues of the garrulous, throughout the city, and throughout the Province.

The *yamen*, because it was the central hub about which the city's wheels revolved, was the focal point for everything. Lacking newspapers, the gossips told their families, friends of their families, and families of their friends, everything that had happened, or had been reported as having happened, at the *yamen*. It was all very exciting.

I never missed an opportunity to go with Father to the *yamen* in Wu Chang, and I was keenly alive, as only a child can be—and a child moreover who has been born with an insatiable curiosity about everything—to the *yamen's* importance.

The *yamen* was the city, the city was the *yamen*, and the *yamen* was my father, Yü Keng.

FOREIGN-DEVIL EDUCATION

MY father, who was well educated and widely traveled, had other ambitions for his children than futures as typical Chinese. While he was intensely patriotic, he did not believe in arranged marriages, in which the love of the two individuals most concerned was not considered. He did not believe in concubinage, at least for himself and his children. And he believed that women should be educated, at least *his* girl-children.

That was one of the principal reasons why we lived in Hankow, rather than in Wu Chang, because in the latter place there would be no opportunity, since it would have been dangerous for a foreign woman to live in Wu Chang.

So we lived in a foreign house in Hankow, and we children studied the Chinese classics in the morning. In the afternoons my sister and I went in our sedan-chairs to an American missionary woman, who was the wife of a man charged with the care of one of the abandoned steamers in the river, and after her regular classes she tutored my sister and myself—for which she received the sum of five dollars per month.

Of course, this business of a woman learning the Chinese classics, and learning foreign languages besides, caused comments, many of them caustic, among the old-fashioned Chinese and Manchus.

Since there are no secrets in China, it became known instantly that Father's family did not live with him at the *yamen*, and that he crossed the river twice daily to be with his family in Hankow. This of course led officials to the suspicion that Father was in some measure succumbing to "foreign influence." Officials of Hupeh began to look into the matter, and of course learned that Yü Keng's children not only lived in a foreign house, in the foreign settlements at Hankow, but were learning foreign languages, and the girls were studying Chinese classics besides. The matter came to the ears of Chang Chih Tung, Viceroy of Hupeh, who undertook to remonstrate with Father, and, since his stand in the matter was representative of the old-fashioned Chinese ideas, I am paraphrasing his remarks as nearly as I can remember them.

"I hear," said Chang Chih Tung to Father, "that your daughters are studying the Chinese classics?"

My father nodded, while the old Viceroy shook his head in grave disapproval.

"I don't believe that Chinese women should be educated," he said tartly. "For if a woman learns how to read and write, the first thing she thinks of is to write poetry about love, or to write letters to, and receive

letters from, *men!* Women should be married young, and marriages arranged by the parents. This is the old way, and the old ways are best."

"My children," said my father, "must be educated. I believe that they will go far in this world, and I am ambitious for them!"

This, of course, was the rankest heresy, and Father knew it. Besides, Chang Chih Tung, as Viceroy, while he held no title, was two grades senior to my father in the affairs of Wu Chang, and naturally exercised a sort of paternal interest in the affairs of his underlings—interest which amounted oftentimes to interference in things which, from the Occidental viewpoint, did not concern him in the least.

"Another thing," continued Chang Chih Tung severely, "I have been informed that your children are learning foreign languages! I warn you that no good can come of it! China hates foreigners, and Chinese who ape the foreign ways! Why, if you persist in educating your daughters, and in allowing your children to learn foreign languages, your own people might even rise up and kill you! Besides, you know how Her Majesty hates foreigners, and everything foreign! If she learns that they are learning foreign-devil languages, she may even have you decapitated!"

Had father not felt he could trust Chang Chih Tung, even though the old Viceroy saw fit to remonstrate with him as to his conduct of personal family matters, he

would never have dared tell him what he then did tell him.

"What interest is it to Her Majesty? As a matter of sober fact, she does not know that I have any daughters!"

"What's that?" demanded Chang Chih Tung. "She doesn't know that an official of the first rank has daughters? Absurd! And why does she not know?"

"Because," said my father slowly, "I did not register my daughters when they were born!"

"Did not register them? And why not, may I ask?"

"I am an official of the first rank, am I not?" asked Father.

Chang Chih Tung nodded.

"And as an official of the first rank, my daughters, upon reaching the age of fourteen or fifteen, are eligible to become secondary wives, or concubines, to His Majesty the Emperor, isn't it so?"

"Yes, indeed!" snapped Chang Chih Tung. "And you would be very proud, or should be, if either of your daughters were chosen by His Majesty to be a secondary wife. It is a high honor, which none below the first rank may attain. It will honor the girl chosen to be concubine, and will bring honor to all her family."

Father did not hesitate in his reply.

"I do not believe in concubinage, at least for my daughters! I do not care for such honor as might be mine through allowing either or both of my daughters

to become playthings of any man, whether Emperor or commoner! I have other plans for my daughters, and I feel that they themselves should have something to say about their own futures, since they themselves will be the parties most vitally interested!"

Where previous remarks of my father had been heresy, this one was little short of the rankest treason, and Chang Chih Tung could have denounced Father to the throne without being criticized, might even have been considered as a true patriot of China had he so denounced Father.

It was true, though much of this I did not learn until later, that Father had not registered the birth of my sister and myself. It was from these registrations that His Majesty was accustomed to pick the names of girl-children of his highest ranking officials; and, in the ordinary course of events, had Father registered us as required by custom, either my sister or myself, or both of us, might easily have been forced to become concubines to His Majesty Kwang Hsu, whom I later grew to know quite well, and who later told me, if I may anticipate a few years, that it would have been evil fortune indeed for me to have become his secondary wife, because he was the unhappiest of emperors, and life with him would have been a terrible thing.

However, back in Wu Chang and Hankow, I knew nothing of these matters, nothing of marriage, secondary wives, and concubinage—save that the boy with

the stiff queue at Sha-Ssu had been discussed as a possible husband for me, and I had been voted out of his possible selection because I was a Manchu—and had big feet!

As previously stated, we had spent some time in France prior to Father's appointment to Sha-Ssu, and I had learned to speak French at an early age. Children learn languages quickly, especially when they play with children who speak those languages; so French, while I did not read or write it, was my first foreign language, and it is still as natural on my tongue as Mandarin, and I express myself in that language more fluently than in English. This language, and English, were to be great assets to me in the years to come.

My father's perpetual fight to educate his children was one of the things that made him great, at least to me. In China, where girls were taught to be pretty only, to become decorous and obedient wives, learning only to cook and sew in order to be proper slaves to the husband's mother, for a father to defy the old order was a terrible thing, and one that required real courage, not only moral but physical as well, as will be shown in another place, when the Boxer Uprising caused us to be classed with *er mao tzu*, or "Chinese Christians."

Father made no effort to hide his ambitions for his children, because he felt he had no reason to be ashamed of them; and, from the date of the birth of the first of us until Father died, his friends and enemies alike never

ceased to criticize—and never succeeded in swerving him from what he considered the proper course. Yet, strangely enough, despite the fact that his failure to register my sister and myself became known to the throne, honors were heaped upon him until his death—where a lesser man might long since have been decapitated.

A Manchu girl who studied classics! Terrible, unbelievable! Yet I studied Chinese classics.

A Manchu girl who knew French! Horrifying! The result might be disastrous and far reaching! But I learned French as a child.

A Manchu girl who studied English! Heresy of heresies, in a country where all foreigners were anathema—some, for good cause; all, because of the derelictions of the few! Yet I studied English.

And the fact that I knew French and English was my greatest asset years later, when I became First Lady-in-Waiting to Her Majesty Tzu Hsi, the Empress Dowager. How strangely does Fate sometimes work to attain her unfathomable ends!

Now, of course, it is not out of the ordinary for Chinese girls to know several foreign languages, to be graduated from Wellesley, Vassar and English universities; but in those days—

Well, my father was original, and was, moreover, one of China's first advocates of reform, which was much needed in China of my childhood. Today I am more

than glad that he persevered in his ambitions for his daughters. He wished them to be "different." He reared them to be "different." He taught them to regard themselves as "different." They *were* "different," because Father had set himself a course, from which he never swerved during his lifetime.

XI

PULSE OF THE EMPIRE

HER MAJESTY TZU HSI, the Empress Dowager of China, was soon to have a birthday. She would be sixty years of age. And all over China, my father told me, officials who served the crown were preparing the most costly gifts to Her Majesty.

The Viceroy of Hupeh was gathering together the wealth of his Province to lay at her feet. The Governor was preparing his gifts, and my father was preparing his. Since it was almost time for my father to make a visit to Peking, and a formal call upon Her Majesty—a journey every high official must make every three or four years—the Viceroy and the Governor asked my father to take their gifts to Her Majesty along with his own, and all the gifts of the three officials were gathered together in my father's *yamen* in Wu Chang. Father often spoke about them, and I was very eager to see the gifts before they were packed, in order to know just exactly what Her Majesty seemed to expect from her high officials.

So Father permitted me to go with him to Wu Chang on a special trip, to see the gifts which had been gathered from almost everywhere by the three officials, for Her

Majesty Tzu Hsi—who was to me at that time an almost mythical creature, whom I never expected to see in my lifetime, a creature as intangible, and as great, as the Dragon of Heaven.

What gorgeous things those officials secured for Her Majesty! I could never tell the whole tale of them, for the great *yamen* of Wu Chang was full to bursting with the wealth of Hupeh, and many of the things were priceless. At this time I was nine years of age, and so the whole thing made more of an impression on me than had many things which had happened in Sha-Ssu.

Father, always the soul of patience, went with me as we examined the countless gifts to the throne, which were to reach the Forbidden City on Her Majesty's sixtieth birthday. Many of those gifts I was destined to see again, years later, when I became First Lady-in-Waiting to Her Majesty, though at the age of nine such ambitions were undreamed of, either by myself or my father—as far as I know, of course, though Father doubtless had plans for his children concerning which he told us nothing. As a "lord," Father doubtless realized that sooner or later his children would come in close contact with the throne.

"What an unbelievable number of gifts!" I exclaimed to Father.

He answered as he always did, as though I were a grown-up, whose every question was important.

"And just think," he said, "that not only in Wu

Chang are presents being gathered together for Her Majesty, but in Hankow, across the river, in Canton, Hong Kong—all over China, high officials are planning, and have been planning for many months, the gifts they must make to Her Majesty!”

“How wonderful it must be to be a person like Her Majesty, so that people everywhere send such gifts to her, the finest they can find! I wonder how I would feel if I were she!”

“Yes,” said my father slowly, “it is very wonderful. But there are other and graver things in the life of Her Majesty than gifts, too many things to tell you about them all, even if I knew. But, Daughter, I would much rather have you here, asking me questions about these gifts, dreaming dreams of greatness which never materialize, than to know you were Empress Dowager of China. Here you are happy, there you could not be!”

And often I pondered this last statement in the years that followed, never realizing of course how much of common sense was in it.

In China it is considered a breach of etiquette to give only one of anything, so that presents are always made in pairs, or in even numbers of four, six, eight, and so on, which of course naturally added to the number of the gifts in my father’s *yamen* awaiting transportation to Peking. I shall tell briefly of some of those gifts, to show the wide range of them, their costliness, and the

importance of gifts to the throne in the days of the Empire.

"This silver set, made from Hupeh silver, is my own gift to Her Majesty," said my father, and I gasped in astonishment at what he showed me. A silver set of dishes, and such dishes!

There was a dish upon which fish was to be served, and this dish was made in the shape of a fish lying upon its side, with its mouth open, a gorgeous thing, with even the scales reproduced with startling clarity and fidelity to nature. There was a dish in which duck was to be served, and this was in the shape of a duck, a duck which was sliced across the middle when the lid of the bowl was removed, yet which was restored to life when the lid was replaced, with his delicately curved neck, his beady eyes, the curved tail of the drake, and the feathers laid back along the silver creature's back as though a loving hand had smoothed it to have its picture taken. There was a dish for chicken, and the dish itself was a silver chicken, with the tail feathers and the comb of the strutting cock. The fruit dishes were shaped for the fruit they were to serve, dishes which looked like great peaches for peaches, and so on, through all the myriad number of this gorgeous silver set of my father's lively imagination.

"How wonderful it must be to be able to eat from dishes which are so grand and gorgeous!" I exclaimed.

Father sighed.

"You must remember," said my father, "that all China brings gifts to Her Majesty on her birthday. There will be many sets of dishes, so many of them that Her Majesty, between now and her next birthday, would never be able to eat from them all. My gifts, perhaps, will cause a little comment because they are different, and then they will be stored away with all the other things for which Her Majesty has little use."

"Then why do you send her such costly presents?"

"Because she may judge her officials by the costliness of their gifts, and it would never do to appear stingy, or lacking in courtesy. No one would dare send Her Majesty a gift of little value, since so to do would show Her Majesty that the official guilty of doing so held little appreciation for her. It is the custom, and she is the Empress Dowager."

How many things that explained!

Then those gorgeous silk hangings, of many colors, rich things of great price, made by the skilled hands of artists who had inherited their artistry from past generations of artists like themselves; their fingers the skilled fingers of inheritance, yet the people themselves perhaps unable even to read or write, and with vocabularies of only a few hundred words. How soft to the touch they were! Glistening things which seemed almost alive to the touch, or when caressed by even the gentlest of breezes!

The designs on the hangings were of four kinds,

though variations of them were almost without number. The fabled phoenix was the most common, typifying the Queen Mother. The stork came next, and was an emblem of good luck, and of long life—since the Chinese believe that the stork lives for a thousand years. The pine tree, because it suggested immortality, the Chinese believing that it never dies. And, of course, the dragons, which are found everywhere in Chinese craftsmanship. I joyed in ruffling the silken hangings, and watching the phoenixes, the storks, and the dragons suddenly come to life, and undulate gracefully, while the pine trees bowed, and bowed, and rippled, like palms upon a wind-swept South Seas beach, or like some strange worshippers at an invisible shrine. A *yamen* filled with wonders, all destined for the court of the Manchus, and Her Majesty the Empress Dowager, who would soon be sixty years of age, who held the four hundred millions of China's population in the hollow of her hand.

Then, too, I remember the bracelets, always two by two because one would have been discourtesy, almost red, because they were pure twenty-four karat gold, pliable so that wearers could change the size of them merely by manipulations with the fingers. Two by two, each pair of exactly the same design, set with gorgeous bits of jade, of pearls or of other precious stones; each pair a priceless creation, bearing no slightest resemblance to any other pair, save that all

were of pure gold, because the Chinese did not care for alloys, however beautiful they might be—especially in gifts to the throne, where alloys would have suggested cheapness, and would have caused the givers to “lose face” for stinginess!

The bracelets were kept in little boxes, whose sides and ends were of glass, as were the covers, so that one could look through and admire without being able to touch. The bottoms were of yellow velvet, because yellow was the color for royalty, and provided a gorgeous setting upon which to exhibit the bracelets. How I longed to touch and caress these bracelets, to feel the coolness of them upon my own arms, and how I envied Her Majesty her prospective ownership of them!

My father read my thoughts.

“Not always does happiness come to those who receive gifts like these,” he told me softly, “for often it is the one who has nothing who has the happiness denied the great ones.”

And then my father told me a story which dealt with the elusive something we call happiness, and I paraphrase the story here as well as I remember it.

“Once upon a time, as all good stories begin, there lived a fairy princess who was very ill, and her father the king was much worried that she got no better. All sorts of medicines were tried, soothsayers were called in and questioned, and still the princess sank day by day.

One day, however, a witch came to the court of the king, and he questioned her about his daughter, asked the old woman how he could save the life of his beloved daughter, and the witch replied: 'There is one thing and one only that will save the life of your daughter! She is very sad, and there is no happiness in her life. Send forth into your kingdom, therefore, and find a person who is thoroughly happy, and when you have found the person, secure that person's garment, bring it back and have the princess wear it. It will make her well again, and happy!'

"So the king sent forth all his soldiers, throughout the length and the breadth of the kingdom, bidding them question everyone they met, seek everywhere for the person thoroughly happy, in order to secure the garment of that person for the princess to wear. Days passed, and weeks, and the happy person could not be found, though the soldiers sought everywhere, and questioned everyone they met. It seemed that everyone in all the kingdom had troubles, large or small, which kept them from being happy. And steadily the princess pined away, and death did not seem to be far off.

"Then one day a pair of the king's soldiers saw a young man riding upon an ox, and the young man was singing, and playing a flute. The soldiers went to him, and began to ask questions.

"'Are you thoroughly happy?' they asked.

"'And why should I not be happy?' replied the

youth. 'The sun is shining, I have no worries or troubles, and I sing the livelong day away as I play my flute.'

"The soldiers looked at each other. Here at last they seemed to have found the thoroughly happy being, a youth, moreover, who himself claimed to be the happiest man in all the kingdom.

"The soldiers spoke again to the youth.

"'We desire your garment to give to the daughter of the king,' they said, 'for she is dying, and needs the garment of a thoroughly happy person to save her life.'

"The eyes of the youth opened in great surprise, and he pondered for a moment before he made reply.

"'Surely,' he said at last, 'you jest with me! Can you not see that I wear no garment save a ragged loin cloth? I am too poor to own garments!'"

I did not understand the story then, but I knew that it somehow made me sad, and made me realize that, even though I had everything, and the greatest father in all the world, I myself was not entirely happy, though I could not have told why. Longings, dreams, phantasies, and hopes that it seemed never would come true.

Then, the most lasting memory of all, of those presents which my father was to take to Her Majesty when he journeyed to Peking on leave, two great clocks of blue and gold, embossed with French cloisonné, which had been ordered from Paris by Chang Chih Tung, the

Viceroy, as his principal gift to Her Majesty. Gorgeous things! How many times I have used that word in referring to those gifts—because no other word seems exactly to fit, and even “gorgeous” fails to do those presents credit.

The top of each clock was a miniature stage, with rails and all the trappings of the French stage of that day, done with great fidelity to detail; and, when the clocks were striking, eight tiny figures came forth at the first sound, and danced upon the stage, retiring again to their hiding place when the striking was ended.

“They dance the minuet,” my father told me.

I remember those clocks to this day. I saw them again years later at the court, and remembered them. When I saw them later they somehow became a symbol, especially those eight figures in each clock, which came forth and danced on the tiny stage when the clocks intoned the hour—and because they became symbols, I ask you now to remember them, and meet them again with me.

Sixteen figures atop two gorgeous clocks, dancing the minuet when the clocks chimed the hours—tiny puppets without will of their own to control their dancing.

XII

WAR CLOUDS

EVERYONE in our house talked of fighting, and I could feel the tension in the air. No one had much to say, at least before the children, but most of the servants, and even the older members of the family, seemed possessed of gloom which would not go away. Naturally I was consumed with curiosity. I always was when things were happening.

And it all came about during our hurry and bustle to leave Hankow and Wu Chang for Peking, of which place I as yet knew nothing, save that it was said to be a gorgeous city, where the Empress Dowager lived, and received the homage of her people, while the Son of Heaven sat on his yellow throne and ruled China—and the world! It was all going to be wonderful, this Peking, and I was eager to go there and see.

But the tension in the house bothered me very much. Why was all this talk of fighting, and of terrible war? What did they mean about fighting? What was the meaning of war?

I went to my father, after I had overheard some of the excited chattering of the servants, and for almost the first time in my life, my father evaded answering me.

"What is all the talk about fighting?" I asked. "Why is everyone so mysterious and worried? Why won't anyone tell me about it?"

Father was very patient, but he did not tell me.

"I do not believe that you would understand it," he told me, "or that I should tell you."

And when Father talked with that tone of finality, I knew he meant it, and that it would do me no good to tease about it. But I was determined, just the same, to find out the truth. It seemed that this was the week in which everything happened, and I was desirous of knowing the truth about everything.

Well, though I hated Hung Fang with an intense hatred, a hatred which never left me even during the years which followed, I went to her for information.

"What is all this talk about fighting?" I asked her.

"Hush instantly!" she snapped at me. "It is no business of yours, and besides you are too stupid to understand!"

So I learned nothing from Hung Fang.

I went then to my elder brother, who at least never talked to me so roughly, or called me stupid.

"Don't bother your little head about it," he said, "you are really too young to know about such things!"

Now wasn't that a strange way to appease the gnawing curiosity of a nine year old child who wanted to know everything?

I still had lessons to learn, still had to learn the Chi-

nese classics. Perhaps my teacher, though I had never given him any cause to love me, and had opposed him in everything, would tell me the truth. Incidentally, since we were to go to Peking, I had high hopes of losing that tutor, of dropping him overboard in the river, or of losing him in the highways and byways of Hankow or Wu Chang before our departure. I had been cheated at Sha-Ssu, and he had followed to Hankow, but surely he would not follow us to Peking.

I went into the study room. The tutor looked very stern; the tension which gripped our household also gripped the tutor, if I knew anything about him. He had a huge book in his hand, but he wasn't looking at the book, and his face was masked with worry. Ah, ha, so he felt it, too! Then he knew! Somehow I'd make him tell me.

He looked at me sternly as I came into his august presence.

"Get to your studies!" he snapped at me.

"What is all this talk about fighting?" I demanded. "Who is fighting, or going to fight, and why are they fighting?"

"Get to your studies!" was the only reply he gave me.

So I started to study, though I'm afraid that I saw nothing of the sprawly Chinese characters, and absorbed nothing of the information on the pages of my book. He knows, I told myself, and I'll make him tell me!

After a time, when I could stand my tutor's behavior no longer, felt as though I would scream if he did not make an end of staring into space and of tapping his finger nails endlessly on his chair, I took my courage in my hands and went to ask him the question again.

"You might as well tell me," I said. "I *will* know! We are always fighting, and I have never liked you, and will be glad when we go to Peking and lose you, but this morning I feel as though I would like to be nice to you!"

For the first time in his life, I'll wager, the tutor smiled at me! Certainly a great change had taken place in the routine order of things!

"You wouldn't understand if I told you," he said finally.

"But you are my teacher," I insisted, "and it is your duty to tell me things. If I don't understand, I will ask you questions, and you can explain things so that I will understand."

"You impossible child!" he said. "I suppose if I am to have any peace, and if you are ever to be able to study again, I must tell you. This, then, is what is happening: Japan and China are at war, and if we don't watch out we will all become Japanese!"

So the secret was at last out, and I must admit that I understood it not at all.

"Why are we at war, and why are we likely to become Japanese, and what are Japanese?" I asked.

I'm afraid my teacher sighed rather hopelessly, but he tried to tell, and I give him all due credit for trying.

"I knew you wouldn't understand," he said; "but there has been trouble between China and Japan for many years, and now the Japanese want to fight us to straighten the matter out—"

"But what trouble, and how will fighting make things straight?"

"It is too much for you to understand—" he began.

"And what are Japanese?" I interrupted again.

"That at least I can tell you in a way you will understand," he said, and this was the story he told me:

"Once upon a time, many many years ago, a Chinese family got lost at sea, and didn't know which way to sail to reach China. All the head of the family knew was to keep going, and that if he kept going he would eventually reach land somewhere. But he was going in the wrong direction. He finally landed on a big island in the sea, and he liked the island, and resolved to make it his home. His children were born there, and grew up there, and married among themselves as generations were born, lived and died, until from that one Chinese family grew a great nation which, in course of time, became very different from the parent stock. This new nation was the first Japan, and the Japanese of today are the

descendants of that one family which got lost at sea. And now there are so many of them that they threaten to come back and capture China, and turn all Chinese into Japanese!"

That was my first knowledge of Japanese, and the first time I had known of the existence of a place called Japan, and while you'll see that my tutor's explanation was rather sketchy, and told less than it implied, it did serve as an explanation of a sort, and with it I had to be satisfied. It seemed odd, though, that people who had once been Chinese should now want to fight the Chinese. But teacher said they had changed so much during the last thousand years or so that they were just like any other foreigners, and spoke a language China did not understand, while, however, they still had the same written language of China.

It was all very strange and bewildering. But one thing was certain: we were leaving Hankow for Peking, the center of the Universe, and I would see wonderful things, and might even have a chance to steal a glimpse of the great Empress Dowager, who received so many presents from her subjects she didn't know what to do with them all.

It was to be many long years, years filled with many experiences, before I was to see Hankow and Wu Chang again.

Hankow and Wu Chang were cities of turmoil. It

was no easy thing to move a family in those days. We had to pack everything and send on ahead of us. No ladies, in the days of the Empire, dared eat at a public restaurant, so we had to have our last meal in our own home, prior to going aboard the China merchant steamer *Chiang Yung*, for the journey to Shanghai. Our last meal was something like a picnic. All our furniture had been sent ahead, and a servant had been ordered to pick out a stateroom for us aboard the *Chiang Yung*, and I'll have something to say about that a little later. But that last meal! No tables or chairs. We spread a cloth on the floor, and the servants prepared our last meal as best they could, and we all sat on the floor to eat it. Some members of the family sat on the window sills, some sat against the walls, and all ate with huge appetite, and hurriedly, because the pots and pans and dishes all had to be washed after the meal and sent on ahead to the steamer. What a lot of excitement, hurry and bustle!

The China merchant steamers of those days did not charge officials for traveling aboard them. It was rather funny the way cabins were chosen. There were cabins for traveling officials, and about eight cabins furnished for the use of traveling foreigners. Father did not care for the cabins set aside for the use of officials, and wanted a cabin arranged for the use of foreigners. Besides, he learned that so many officials were going down-river on

the *Chiang Yung*, that all cabins had already been taken.

So Father sent a servant aboard to pick out a cabin set aside for the use of foreigners. All that had to be done in those days was to inform the steamship company that one was sailing by a certain boat, with all one's family, and then send a servant aboard to pick out the cabin. There was no purser, and the captain was not consulted except in case of dispute. The servant simply went aboard, picked out the cabin he felt to be suitable for his master, and tacked a red card, about three inches long by an inch in width, over the door, this card bearing the name of the head of the family which had chosen this particular cabin.

The servant came back to report that he had picked out a foreign-devil cabin for Father and his family, and everything seemed to be arranged.

But when we got aboard late at night, it was to find that some official who had decided to leave at the last minute had taken our cabin! It was no fault of his, probably, for his servants also picked out his cabin, apparently by the simple expedient of removing the red card bearing Father's name, and substituting therefor the red card bearing the name of his own master. The servants were in an uproar of argument when we arrived aboard, and a fight impended. It was late, and most of the passengers had already retired, and the ser-

vants were making so much noise that I fear there was little sleep for those passengers.

To add to our embarrassment, the official who had taken Father's cabin had retired, together with his family.

In the midst of the argument as to what was to be done about it, a foreign official who hadn't been able to sleep came out to take a hand in the discussion.

"What's all the rumpus here?" he demanded. "Are you blamed Chinks going to argue until tomorrow morning?"

I am afraid he got little satisfaction, for even "Chinks" resent this mode of address, though it sometimes took a long time for foreigners to realize this.

Finally the captain's boy took a hand in the discussion, and he distinctly remembered that our servant had tacked the red card bearing Father's name above the door of this stateroom. Then the captain was finally called in, and he ruled that we had priority, and that Father's family should have the cabin.

So with much grumbling, the other official's family was routed out, and we took over the cabin. It was a dirty place, and didn't smell nice. There was but one thing to recommend it, and even that might be questioned—the official's family had got the beds warm!

I have forgotten how long it took us to reach Shanghai, but I remember that we reached the place one afternoon at one o'clock, and that because the *Hsing Fung*,

was to sail for Tientsin at four o'clock, we had to transfer to the other ship immediately, without being able to go ashore.

So the trouble started all over again. Certainly a family on the move in China of the Empire had to understand management! The red card over the cabin door applied in this case again, and finally we got away on the long journey to Tientsin, which was a rough journey that seemed endless. At Tientsin we changed to houseboats for the journey to Tungchow, sixteen miles from Peking, along the Pei Ho River.

It is about ninety miles from Tientsin to Peking by the river, and the journey on the houseboat was much like our journey from Sha-Ssu to Wu Chang, and required three days.

At Tungchow we had more trouble. My sister and I rode in a Peking cart, the first I had ever seen. It was Mother's orders, and parents had to be obeyed. Mother rode in the only sedan-chair, while Father rode a mule. Those sixteen miles to Peking! The road was paved with huge stones, some of which thrust themselves up more than a foot above the roughest road I have ever traveled, and those sixteen miles of bouncing and jolting—up to the time we disobeyed orders and took to the backs of donkeys—were a nightmare.

We had managed to get something to eat at a tea house in Tungchow, and I had had a lunch made up of Chinese breads and cakes, upon which I intended feast-

ing during those sixteen miles to Peking. I took my basket aboard the Peking cart, and set it down behind me as I sat flat on the floor of the unwieldy cart—the most uncomfortable mode of travel invented by mankind!—and I had forgotten that the floor of the cart was latticed. So when I got hungry, or had learned to ride the cart without bashing my head *too* frequently against the sides when the cart bounced, I looked for my lunch, only to find that it had all disappeared through the floor of the cart.

Long before we had traversed those sixteen miles, I had bounced against the side of the cart so many times that I was black and blue all over, especially my head, which had struck many resounding blows against the side of the cart.

My elder brother, who rode a donkey alongside, told my sister and me that we would surely have our brains bashed out before we reached Peking, and said that we'd better ride donkeys the rest of the way in.

"But Mother said for us to ride in the Peking cart," I objected, "and she will be displeased if we disobey her."

Obedience to parents is the first law of the Chinese family.

"I'll take all the blame," said my brother. "You ride donkeys the rest of the way in."

So we did, and Mother was not as angry as she had every right to be. The rest of the family got in ahead of us, and were waiting for our arrival.

And, sitting there, nonchalantly at home in the heart of the family, was the Chinese tutor we *hadn't* lost in Wu Chang, and for perhaps the second time in his life the hateful creature smiled!

We had arrived in Peking, the mecca of the world!

XIII

THROUGH "CHI WHA MEN"

THE sun was hovering just above the huge wall surrounding Peking when we approached the city of my dreams. The wall was a huge thing, which seemed to me to tower to the very heavens. And the nearer we came to the city the larger and more forbidding grew the wall, until it seemed to my childish mind to blot out the heavens, a gigantic barrier flung across the unknown world ahead.

Then we entered the first part of the gate called *Chi Wha Men*, and had at last reached Peking.

How huge that wall! Today I can still see it. It still is huge, but never again will seem as huge as in the days when I was nine years of age, and rode through *Chi Wha Men* on a donkey. I thought to myself:

"What a huge wall! What a tiny human, and what a small donkey!"

We, the donkey and I, were mere ants, entering the abode of giants. Towering, menacing, cold—and old. The odor of age, of romance, of almost forgotten terrors, of sieges past and done and no longer remembered—a huge rampart beyond which were surely housed the wonderful intriguing mysteries of the Universe. How

great would Peking be after Sha-Ssu, Wu Chang, and Hankow! And in a few minutes I was to see the city. The hardships of the long journey from Wu Chang to Shanghai, the endless squabbling about the red cards over the cabin doors, the same when we transferred to the other boat at Shanghai, the long rough voyage to Tientsin, the slow-moving houseboats, and the first part of this sixteen mile journey, in which I had been beaten black and blue by the perpetual bouncing and jouncing of the Peking cart—all these were forgotten as *Chi Wha Men* opened wide its mouth to me, a diminutive pilgrim journeying to a mecca of childish dreams, and swallowed me up.

The great ponderous gates were open, because it was not yet night, though the westerling sun gave promise that night would soon come. Huge nails in rows held the gates together, mute challenges to enemies who might lay siege to Peking, as they had in the past.

Then a turn to the left, and another gate, and then the streets of Peking! Peking! Peking of the Empire! No raucous voiced automobiles jeered at the populace, causing the coolies to scurry right and left to evade destruction. No rikshas yet, for the first one still had to wait for thirteen years to make its epochal journey to Peking.

My eyes were very busy, for what a place this was after the other places I had seen! And how different, after all, it was from what I had expected! I had heard

so much about Peking. I expected the streets to be paved with gold, jade, or something equally precious—and they were not, but even so this first sight of Peking was thrilling.

There were great gorgeous sedan-chairs, their colors informing the world of Peking of the rank of the personage who rode inside, invisible to the eyes of the humble. Sedan-chairs borne by many coolies. There was one important chair, green like my father's, which told that an official of the first rank was passing, and this one had mounted outriders, boys who ran ahead and ordered the populace to make way, toiling chair-bearers who perspired at their labors, whose faces were frowning masks of concentration on their tasks.

There were donkeys by the scores and hundreds, threading their patient way through the press—and press it was, for the streets of Peking were packed, and very noisy, and somewhat odorous.

Double-humped camels came through the gate, trains of them, bearing produce of many kinds, some of it perhaps from beyond the Gobi Desert, from Urga perhaps, or even beyond, and huge bearded men, looking like giants because they were so high above the passing herd, were riding in, swaying and rolling with the uneven gait of their lumbering mounts—camel trains of mysterious secrets—beside which a diminutive donkey, bearing a diminutive Manchu girl-child with a straight queue tied with a red string were small indeed. Huge bearded men



A CONFUSING FIRST PICTURE OF THE ENTRANCE TO PEKING OF THE
EMPIRE!

with piercing eyes which looked straight ahead, scorning to notice the rabble which flowed like a turgid stream under the feet of the camels.

And the rabble itself! Countless hundreds of them, dressed in all sorts of clothing, from velvets and silks to rags—or even nothing at all, at least above the waist. Peddlers calling their wares in a score of dialects, swearing when jostled by careless shoulders, heaping invective impartially upon the heads of all. Perspiring men who brushed against one's tiny donkey, and against the diminutive rider, and swore because they did not make way. Turmoil and bustle; people going in all directions. No traffic regulations. Just a massed crowd which seemed to sway, to seethe and swarm, like armies upon armies of tireless ants, but with less order in their toiling—apparently.

Shouts, cries—dialects. Confusion filled with faces which laughed, lips writhing back in smiles and grins, rows of teeth clean and unclean. A confusing first picture of the entrance to Peking of the Empire! After all, what sort of a picture could a girl of nine retain of those mad, glorious, gorgeous days?

There were coolies carrying loads of charcoal in two baskets, one on either end of a pole across the shoulders; tiny baskets with great loads in them, loads which swelled and bulged out far beyond the edges of the baskets; piled with great care, wedged in. If a careless jostler happened to bump against the keystone of char-

coal lumps, verily would the street have been filled with black diamonds of great size, and there would have been weeping, perhaps, screamed invective surely, and folks scrambling to salvage something from the wreckage.

A Peking cart painted blue had a canopied top of blue, and a red border below, which proved that its owner was a high official.

Streets of gold indeed! Streets of ankle deep dust instead, in which the feet of donkeys kicked up clouds of choking particles which bit at the nostrils, covered the face, and forced one to cough as though with a fatal illness. And when it rained! But that would be later. It was a nice afternoon when I passed through *Chi Wha Men*, and the sun was just dropping behind the Western Hills to keep her daily rendezvous with the King of Darkness. Ahead of us were coolies bearing great buckets of water, and huge spoons or ladles made of willow tree. With the huge ladles they rhythmically scooped water from their buckets, and scattered it in the street, in a vain effort to keep down the dust.

So we entered Hatamen Street. How different from Hatamen Street of today! There then were shops on both sides of the street. And what a street! There was a ridge in its center, perhaps four feet above the street on either side. This ridge was a little street in itself, reserved for sedan-chairs and Peking carts, where grand people could ride along, high above the rabble-river on either side. The sides were for peddlers carrying their

basketed produce, for beggars, for pedestrians. A hurly burly. A ridge cutting a mighty river in twain, only to become a river itself, of another kind.

But paved with gold and jade, indeed! It was very disappointing, in spite of the crowds and the excitement. How small I felt; how small I still feel in Peking, and how I always remember that little Manchu child on the little donkey when she first visited Peking, with her eyes very wide, and her mouth open to catch the dust kicked up by the patient feet of her mount.

Shop signs! Whole forests of them intrigued me. There was the shoemaker's sign, a board some ten feet long by a foot and a half broad, hanging before the shop, the long way up and down. On either side of the sign were pictures of boots and shoes, recognizable in spite of the fact that the artists would not have measured up to Western standards. Shop fronts done in gold, and silver, and lacquer. Shop fronts of rare beauty, because China of the Empire was rich.

Pauper and rich man, with shops catering to them all.

Peking the beautiful, then as today, in spite of the encroachments of age—a wonder city, beautiful in spite of splotches of tawdriness. A big city, a little girl riding through on a little donkey!

Then the sun dipped into the ravines of the Western Hills and was hidden away, and night began to creep over the walls of the city to possess Peking. We must hurry. We must go to the North City, through the

place of "The East Four Archways"—*Tung Ssu Pailo*—to the place where my father had a great house in which a friend had lived for the past four years, and which I had never seen, but about which I had heard much.

Long before we reached the *pailos*, which towered over us almost as hugely as *Chi Wha Men*, darkness had fallen, and the lamplighters had come forth to light the funny lamps set at intervals along the street. The lamps were like little towers, made of brick, rising to a height of perhaps four feet. At the top of each tower was a little wooden house with four windows facing the cardinal points of the compass, the windows having paper panes. Inside each little house was an ordinary oil lamp, the special care of the lamplighters. One tiny little lamp to light a great space—for the lamps were few and far between—and the lamps rather served as beacons, eyes through the night, than as illumination. You looked at the eyes and moved toward them, feeling your way through the darkness with your feet if you walked, trusting your chair-bearers if you rode in a sedan-chair, trusting your donkey if you came as I did.

Just before we reached our destination, I saw two great eyes of flame coming to meet me. They were eyes which jiggled and danced. When they came quite close I knew them for what they were, as did everyone else who saw them. They were the lanterns which preceded the sedan-chair of a high official, so that folks would see, and recognize, and make way.

So I entered Peking the beautiful for the first time, and found that the streets after all were not of gold or of jade, but that the city was glorious just the same.

Not so very far away, was the Forbidden City, where Her Majesty the Empress Dowager lived in her palaces, and ruled her people—who sent her presents she could not use because there were so many of them.

XIV

AN AUDIENCE WITH PRINCE KUNG

OUR own house in Peking had been turned over to a friend four years before, and the friend still used the house, and was unable to turn it back to us, despite the fact that he paid no rent, and had had six months' advance notice of our coming.

So another friend allowed us the use of his house, and it is of this house I shall presently have somewhat more to say.

Many things narrated from here forward were not entirely clear to me at the age of nine years, but they were important matters, having much to do with the welfare of China, with Father's career, and with my own, because of which I have leavened the memories of that girl of nine whom I was, with observations made later, when I was old enough to understand explanations.

The next day after our arrival in Peking our new home was a place of excitement, and many people came to us. After the usual custom, officials of all ranks sent presents, and always the presents were of food, cooked and uncooked.

One such present—I call it one present though there was enough variety and quantity to have fed a family

thrice the size of ours for many days—came from Prince Kung, own brother to the late husband of the Empress Dowager Tzu Hsi. And with the present came a servant with the verbal command for my father to attend at once upon Prince Kung. The Prince was of the Imperial Clan of course, as brother to the late Emperor Hsien Feng, and as such was a valued advisor of Her Majesty the Empress Dowager, and a command from him amounted to a royal command.

Besides, there was war with Japan, and all China was worried.

So my father set out that morning for his audience with Prince Kung, and we all wondered what was to happen, and what tasks would be assigned my father, and whether, when his vacation was over, he and his family would return to Wu Chang.

Father was very serious about this impending visit, and there was poorly suppressed excitement in the household. What was going to happen? Prince Kung was scarcely sending for Father to upbraid him for anything, else His Highness would not have sent us such elaborate gifts of food. No, whatever the command indicated, it meant nothing which would harm Father.

Father was gone most of the day, and with my usual bursting curiosity, I spent the time wondering what the high ones were doing to him, and waiting for him to come home and tell me. And while Father was gone, I took the opportunity to investigate our new home. It

was a magnificent place, grander even than the *yamen* at Wu Chang, finer even than our own house which our friend was not yet ready to turn over to us.

Of course there were the inevitable walls, masking our view of the noisy streets outside, save where the rockeries were higher than the walls, and a persistent climber could mount to the heights and peer over at the hurrying crowds outside, listen closely to what was said, and in general be in touch with the world outside. I always resented walls, and seclusion, always desired to try my wings. I had never been made to be a slave of old Chinese custom—which decreed that the Chinese woman's place was in the home, with a vengeance incomprehensible to the woman of the West.

The inevitable courtyards and gardens, and goldfish ponds, the latter surrounded by aged willows which dipped their fingers wetly into the ponds, and seemed to be weeping for sorrow, like ladies suffering, their hair hanging in wisps over their sagging bodies, the ends a-wash. That sounds a bit silly perhaps, but I was nine, remember, and my fancies were often silly, and I make no apology for them.

I went everywhere in our new home where I was permitted, or where I could manage without permission, for stories had it that this house was haunted. I did not understand that, but it sounded interesting to one who was curious, and I wanted to know what was meant by it, and sought through the courtyards and the houses

which flanked them for the secret of the "haunts," whatever they were, and to search out the origin of the tales the servants told.

This house was different from our house in Hankow, because the latter had been a foreign-built house, while this one was strictly Chinese, a Peking-house, and was quite the most wonderful house I ever lived in.

And as I wandered around, noting everything, touching everything, noting the sometimes grotesque shapes of the rockeries, noting how the willow trees seemed to weep, how the flowers blushed like girls who are being teased by willful boys, and how the walks wound in and out as though they had been planned and traced by fleeing serpents, back in my mind was the thought that I wished Father would hurry home and tell us what Prince Kung wished of him.

But the hours dragged along. I had almost exhausted the adventurous possibilities of the new house and the gardens, the rockeries and the high walls, and still Father had not returned. Noon came, and the sun started toward the Western Hills, down the sky, but still Father did not come. He remained all day with Prince Kung.

And when he did come home I was bitterly disappointed, for he was intensely preoccupied, and had little time for a nine year old girl-child whose curiosity was consuming her. Very serious, and with a face that was rather long and thoughtful—and he wouldn't tell me.

For the first time in my memory, he was just a little impatient with me, and it hurt me deeply. What had Prince Kung had to say to Father?

Why was Father so nervous? Seldom had I seen him nervous enough to pace the floor, or so deeply worried.

But he had to talk to someone, and I could always come in unobtrusively and listen.

It was to Mother he confided much of what happened, and though I did not understand it all then, of course, I did understand it later, and it is my later, more matured knowledge which colors the conversation paraphrased below:

"What did the Prince wish of you?" asked Mother.

"We are at war with Japan," said Father, "and the Prince has been instructed by Her Majesty to create a Department of Military Affairs, as a separate department from the Department of War. The Prince is to head the Department, and I am to be second to him in authority!"

What marvelous news was this! Prince Kung was second only to Her Majesty, Father was to be second to Prince Kung, which placed him very high indeed in the affairs of the Celestial Kingdom. But Father didn't seem especially pleased, though of course he must have been, or honored by his appointment.

"Prince Kung will give orders, and I will try my best to see that they are carried out. Fortunately he is a man of wisdom, and will listen to advice, so my task

won't seem so completely impossible as it first looked."

"Just what is this new department supposed to do?"

"It is formed for the purpose of formulating plans to defend China against the Japanese. I know, of course, and so does Prince Kung, that if war actually comes, we haven't a chance against Japan. We are a peaceful nation, knowing nothing whatever about war, while Japan knows much. That we will go down to defeat is a foregone conclusion. We can, however, but do our best—and hope that our muddled affairs may be properly straightened out by some nation's understanding arbitration."

Big words, these, for a child of nine, but I listened, just the same, though understanding of it all did not come until years later. Even to me, however, some of the things my father told were funny indeed.

"The highest official in the new department, aside from Prince Kung," continued Father, "is a nice old gentleman who knows the Chinese classics almost by heart. He was chosen because he is so wise, and because he is a great scholar. Unfortunately, he knows nothing about war, and what it will mean to us, nor how to prepare China for defense. Here are some of the things which happened today, when we got the members of the new department together: you know many Chinese believe that foreigners, because they wear straight trousers, and not the gowns which give such free play to the legs, have no knees, and that their legs are straight

and stiff! How silly this is to us, who have traveled! But, would you believe it? the proposition actually was advanced today that the Chinese army be equipped in its entirety with long bamboo poles, to be used for the express purpose of pushing over the Japanese soldiers, who would, because of their stiff legs, then be unable to get to their feet again, and so would be out of the fight!

"I came into the discussion here, for the old Chinese scholar, who was inclined to listen to this proposal, was really in earnest about the whole thing, and I made this proposition to him, hoping he would understand the absurdity of it, and see how silly the idea of the bamboo poles! Why not, I asked the new department, arm our soldiers with volumes of the Chinese classics, and when we are come to hand-to-hand conflict with the Japanese, hurl the books at them? These are heavy, and will bowl them over as effectively as bamboo poles, and will moreover be easier to procure, because China is overburdened with Chinese classics!"

Mother laughed heartily.

"And what," she said, "did the old gentleman of the classics say to that?"

"What did he say?" shouted Father. "He did not see the absurdity of it at all! On the contrary, he accepted it as he had accepted the proposition of the bamboo poles, and decided that it should be placed before the new department for sober consideration!"

Mother accorded this statement the silence it de-

served. Evidently the old gentleman being discussed had no sense of humor. After all, when he understood nothing save the Chinese classics, how could he have had a sense of humor?

"Nor is that all," continued Father. "Despite the fact that it was shown conclusively that we were in no condition to defend our country against Japan, many voiced the belief that we had all the chance in the world. One man started the dispute about armament by saying that we had about ten China merchant boats, which could be easily manned and armed, and sent forth to meet the Japanese at sea, and fight them off our coasts! Just imagine! Ten tubs not even fit for passenger service, boats which are fit for little save as carriers of market produce, to be converted into men-of-war by a wave of the hand, fully manned and armed!"

This is enough to show something of the times in which my father lived and was most active, and something of the backward looking attitude of even the highest Chinese officials. My father was early an advocate for reform, and the above will show something of the uphill task he set himself. From the day when he accepted the post with the Department of Military Affairs, memorials denouncing his policies began to go daily to the throne, and Father was very definitely placed, outside the court at least, with that class so objectionable to the Chinese way of thinking, later known as *er mao tzu*, which might well be translated as "Chi-

nese foreigners." This classification was to make my father's official life a perpetual trial and tribulation but was to bring out, at least in the mind of one small daughter, to whom Father was always right, the inborn greatness of Yü Keng.

CONFLICT

THE China-Japan war was ended, and China had been disgraced—but for the friendliness of the American government. I don't remember much about the "war," save that its ending made my father's home a gathering place for many visitors, of many different nationalities.

I remember especially a conference between my father and Colonel Charles Denby.

"We certainly owe much to America," my father said at this conference. "We couldn't very well tell the Japanese that we were not in condition to fight, and ask them to please end the struggle. It is disgrace enough in any case, because China was totally unprepared for war to begin with. Then your country came to our assistance, Colonel, and settled the affair by arbitration, thus 'saving our face' to some extent. China should be eternally grateful."

Of course I didn't understand it, especially when the speakers used big words, like "assistance" and "arbitration"; but I sensed that great events were to transpire, and that some drastic change was due to take place in China, and that it would materially affect our family. It all seemed strange that two men should so calmly

regulate large affairs by word of mouth, as Father and Minister Colonel Denby were doing. The Colonel was a frequent visitor in those troublous days, and, while I didn't know much about him, I knew that I liked him, and that he was Father's friend. It seemed, then, that war was over, and that something else would happen soon.

Father, first of the advocates of reform in China, despite the fact that he was a Manchu, and a White Bannerman besides, had attempted many reforms, which rarely went beyond the experimental stage, because China did not seem to be ready for any change. Father wanted to reform the impossible postal service, and to arrange a tax system; but he was continually opposed by men in power who were his enemies for personal reasons, or who were just plainly opposed to reform of any kind.

Fortunately for Father, he was a friend of Prince Kung, with whom he had served during the "Opium War," when that beautiful palace of Yuan-ming-Yuan was destroyed beyond possibility of restoration. Prince Kung, while in sympathy with the conservative policies of Her Majesty Tzu Hsi, was in sympathy to a certain extent with Father's plans, especially the postal service reform and the making of internal revenue stamps. Prince Kung was therefore a powerful ally of Father's at court, aside from the fact that Father was himself a favorite with Her Majesty.

But those days after the China-Japan War!

Visitors every day. Americans, British, Chinese, Manchu—every nationality under the sun—some friends, some enemies of Father, yet all came to him because of his position, and because all recognized in him a man who was willing to undertake any tasks, however difficult. Those visitors move across the retina of my memory like fantastic figures on some quaint frieze. Tall men who were pompous or cringing, fat men who smiled and decided the fate of nations with a laugh on their lips. Men with scrawny necks and Adam's apples of prominence which dashed up and down their throats when they talked over grave issues. Men who followed the Chinese custom and came to Father for preference: the custom being that when an official drew a good salary, unfortunates could call upon him to set aside a certain monthly sum of it for them. How many men who did nothing whatever were paid fifty or a hundred Mex dollars per month by Father! Interpreters who didn't even speak good Chinese. Secretaries who could neither read nor write. Diplomats who didn't know the meaning of the word. Clerks who reported only to collect their stipend! This was the custom, and Father never found fault with it. It was not considered "grafting" because the money came, not from the government, but out of the pay of the official, and, as I recall it, Father, because he was compassionate—and ofttimes imposed upon in consequence—had more of these "at-

tachés" than other officials who drew even higher salaries from the government. It was a custom with which no one quarreled. And the "attachés" were the only Chinese who ever found fault with this custom—and then only when they had to be put to the bother of calling to collect, or when the stipend was not increased without request!

A strange chaotic existence, a house always full of visitors, most of them come to ask favors. All the circumlocutions which Father hated, though no Chinese of the old régime was ever known to come straight to the point on any subject. Visitors would call, be ushered in. Father always knew why they came, since there are no secrets in China, but he was compelled to listen to long talks on the weather, court gossip, politics, and the late war—everything under the sun except the nature of the visit; and it was this impatience of Father's, with at least this one Chinese custom, which was the cause of some of the memorials sent to the throne denouncing Father through the Board of Censors. Fortunately, "Old Buddha" had a will of her own, and was not often swayed by these memorials, but they did not make easier the way my father traveled, for all that. In those troublous days of the China-Japan War, and right afterward, enemies of Father sent almost daily complaints to the throne concerning him. One might deal with this business of compelling callers to state their business without verbal circumlocutions; one might deal with

Father's sympathy with "foreign influence" in reorganizing the postal service; everything he did was made the subject of scathing memorials to the throne, which Her Majesty invariably "filed for future reference," and did not again refer to. Prince Kung was a friend indeed, and so was Yung Lu, faithful friend, vassal and ally of Her Majesty all his days.

Father was first accused of being influenced by foreigners when he opposed the intention of the new Department of Military Affairs to make the China-Japan War an excuse to drive all foreigners out of China, and this insane idea he opposed so bitterly he made many enemies among both Chinese and Manchus, one of the latter of whom gave no excuse for his inimical attitude save that he "did not like Yü Keng and never had liked him."

One other conference remains in my memory most persistently. Yung Lu, concerning whom I had heard much, had been a friend of Father's for many years, and I, as always, was listening when the distinguished old friend of the Empress Dowager came to call.

"Yü Keng," he said, "I understand you, and am your friend. You know that, because our friendship has lasted for years. I am here to give you some advice, and to aid you if you will take it."

"I am listening," said my father.

"Scarcely a day passes," said Yung Lu, "that some enemy of yours does not denounce you to the throne.

So far Her Majesty has merely filed these memorials, but she always reads them! She is conservative, and not in sympathy with many of your proposed reforms, but she takes no action because she trusts you. However, this matter of daily denunciations will surely have some effect in the end, and may cause you endless trouble. You know how strong-willed Her Majesty is, and that she is a woman of whims—”

“What do you suggest?” interrupted my father.

“How would you like to go to Japan?”

“Why should I go to Japan? What is there there for me to do? How will that relieve me of whatever trouble my enemies would cause me at the court?”

“Simply this: the Chinese Legation at Tokyo was deserted by all the legation people when the war broke out. They fled like frightened chickens, fleeing for their lives, sure that the Japanese would take and kill them. They left everything in a terrible muddle there, and, now that the war is ended, a strong hand at the helm in our legation in Japan is needed—and every other eligible is afraid to go! If you care to go to Japan as our new minister, I will recommend you to Her Majesty. You would then be away from your own people for four years, and would, moreover, be doing a great and important work, a work far more difficult than the work you are now doing. You should go. You will be happier there, as will your family, and Prince Kung would gladly add his voice to mine in recommending you for

the post. Her Majesty would be pleased to send you there. China is not ready for your ideas, if she ever will be. You will give your enemies a chance to forget by going."

For a long time my father thought the matter over. It would mean travel and experience for his family, it was an important task, that of restoring friendly relationship between China and Japan, and there was danger attached to the post besides. It would, in addition, take father's family away from Old-China restrictions, which irked him all his life.

Finally he gave Yung Lu his decision.

"You may recommend me to Her Majesty for the post," he said. "I shall be glad to go."

I wondered how the story got abroad so quickly! This new post was an important promotion, carrying with it a decided increase in salary, and the Empire was never niggardly with her ministers. It was not called a salary, however. A certain amount was set aside to carry legation expenses, out of which Father had to pay himself and all the legation officials. With the new post came added "attachés," new people recommended by friends who had "influence" with Father, so that the retinue he took with him to Japan was a huge one, very few of the "attachés" doing anything or being capable of doing anything save collect the stipend, which was all they expected to do, and all that was expected of them.

To casual travelers with us, all the added "attachés"

must have given an impression of wealth and grandeur, an impression which would have suffered a decided shock had they known.

Father was resigned to the "attachés," as part of a system which custom had decreed many, many years ago, and which he could not flout without most assuredly bringing all sorts of criticism down upon his head. For the very people who thus lived on officials like so many parasites would have been the first to complain, and, through the Board of Censors, see that their complaints reached Her Majesty.

China was thus filled with Sinbad's, each of whom carried not one but many old men of the sea on his shoulders—old men who were prone to dictate, and fight most vigorously for their "rights."

It would have been ridiculous, had it not been so exhausting. Imagine paying people to interfere in your business, people to whom even your personal affairs were matters for criticism and comment! I often wondered how the custom started. I know how it ended as far as Father was concerned: his death freed him of them all!

OFFICIAL GRANDEUR

AWAY back there in Sha-Ssu and Wu Chang, I had thought that the pomp and show of our arrivals and departures had been wonderful to behold. But it was as nothing compared to our triumphal journey from Peking to Japan, via Tientsin and Shanghai. The last three days of our stay in Peking were a nightmare which will go with me always. Hung Fang—delightful creature!—was given *carte blanche* to manage things, and she, to give her all credit, was a good manager. But she was so impatient with everyone.

During our preparations for departure from Peking, our house was always crowded. People asking favors, seeking preference; people come to give Father advice as to how a Chinese Minister should behave in such a depraved country as Japan. My head whirls when I try to recall all the reasons why the people called on Father in never-ending streams—a concourse of color, babbling rivers of people coming and going, noise and confusion.

I never had realized before—which was probably natural in my then brief span of life—what it meant for Father to become a Minister abroad. The Son of

Heaven himself would scarcely have commanded more attention; but of course that is silly. Just observe all that happened to Father, who was a mere minister, and you will realize what China must have done to show honor to her Emperors and Empresses—who were as high above Father as heaven above the earth—except, of course, to me!

When I heard that it would be my lot once more to travel those ghastly sixteen miles to Tungchow, I was ready to rebel—only children of China never rebelled against parental authority. Besides, I had been ordered to be silent so many times during the past three days, ordered by everybody from Mother to Hung Fang, that I began to entertain the thought that perhaps grown-ups had enough worries without burdening themselves with mine. Hung Fang had been charged with the task of properly dressing my sister and me, and by this time I was old enough to have quite decided ideas about becoming clothes for myself—and my ideas very naturally conflicted with those of Hung Fang. She certainly thought of ugly things for sister and me to wear, and once I got so angry at her overbearing manner I tried to scratch her eyes out, with but slight success, though I did manage to emphasize to her the idea that I was displeased.

When the day of our departure arrived, Father informed his family that they would ride to Tungchow as follows: Mother in a sedan-chair, the rest of us on

horses, mules, and donkeys. And with vast relief, not realizing that horseback riding might not be so nice for a young girl who has been tenderly reared, I prepared to ride those sixteen miles to Tungchow in comfort. Alas! for the illusions of youth!

But the first part of the journey wasn't so bad. That was before I learned that which every lady learns when she starts riding horseback: that some are built to withstand the bouncing and shaking, and that some are not. I felt that I was not, during the last part of the sixteen miles, and for several days afterward—until my anatomy had been cured by Nature of the ills of the saddle.

What a thrill the first part of that ride, however! Yü Keng, a Minister going abroad! It seemed to me that half of Peking must have elected to go as far as Tungchow to see the Minister off on the first part of his journey.

Here is a list of our own people, which will give some idea of the size of the entire cavalcade:

In addition to our own family, which was composed of six people, we had a first, second, and third secretary, each with his family; two writers who were ignorant, for the most part, of writing; two military "attachés" who knew nothing of military matters; two naval "attachés" who had never been to sea; six interpreters, four of whom knew no Japanese; two doctors with five cases of Chinese herbs; three cooks who were excellent; two barbers, because in those days the head was shaved, save

for the queue; a number one house boy; a number two house boy; two "boys" for Father's office; four *amahs* who were more or less useless because they had bound feet on which it was almost impossible to walk; seven slave girls who did nothing but interfere with people who really wished to do something, yet whom we must take and care for because they had no one in all the world to look after them, or who would have them around, save ourselves. All in all, counting the families of the three secretaries—two of whom were superfluous—our own family circle consisted of about fifty people. This, of course, was a vastly reduced retinue, due to the exigencies of travel. When we had a fixed residence, there were so many "attachés" that even one as perpetually curious as myself might not recognize the face of a servant who had been with the family for years.

Now, consider that every official of importance in Peking who could be spared from his duties decided to go with us as far as Tungchow to see Father off, and that each official took with him as large a proportion of his staff—most of them larger than our own, because they were officials of fixed residence—and you will realize something of the size of our cavalcade! My own place, as daughter of Yü Keng, was well up front, and it was a never-ending thrill for me to look back along the trail where there were curves, and see the cavalcade stretched out behind us, like a great serpent who, crawl

however he may, still has endless miles of tail behind him which never comes to view. There were Peking carts which bounced and jounced, sedan-chairs without number which swayed and rocked, mules and donkeys that brayed, horses that whickered, jangling their rich and gaudy trappings; colors which dimmed the glory of rainbows, an endless river of colors stretching back and back. And noise! Servants in our family had friends among the servants of the other families which went to Tungchow with us, and they were always shouting and screaming to one another. Our servants, perhaps, had friends among the servants of an official of the first rank, and these exchanged confidences back and forth at the top of their voices, regardless of the fact that the staffs of one, two, or even more, other officials might be on the trail between the shouters. There is no doubt that, though the tail of the snake which was us was invisible behind us, the very last person who formed that tail could quite easily have heard the shouting of the leading member of the cavalcade.

At long last we reached Tungchow, and little by little the rest of the snake crawled in and formed into an irregular coil of brilliant hues. I leave the colorful part of it to your fancy, for though in those days things of this sort were my life, yet the description of them is almost beyond me. One thing I must say, however, is that there was no checking system for baggage, and that our servants had to look after our things and their

own. What a perpetual scramble! Imagine it! A minister and his family had to dress according to his rank, and his servants with him. Then there were the heirlooms, the household furnishings. Really, it is too much; but a little tale about one of the *amabs* who had been with us for years will give some idea of the confusion of the whole. She sat on the banks of the river and wept, and would not be comforted, and the burden of her wail was this:

"Ai, ooooo! My trunk is lost! Ai, ooooo! It contained a gold bracelet given me when Der Ling was one year of age! Ai, ooooo! Two gold earrings given me by Tai Tai at Sha-Ssu! Ai, oooo! Two gold rings ten years old! Ai, oooo! Ai, ooooo! My trunk is lost! Miserable me! Ai, ooooooooooooo! Terrible, terrible, terrible!"

All the time she sat and rocked back and forth, back and forth, and no one, not even Hung Fang, could stop her wailing and lamentations. And she was only one of our fifty!

I pass over the trip to Tientsin by houseboat, since it was much like our previous journey up-river. But how different this time our arrival at Tientsin! Now Father was a minister, going abroad. Every official in Tientsin came forth to meet him, and he was informed that, according to the custom, a temple had been made ready for his occupancy during his stay in Tientsin. Father knew that to refuse to accept the hospitality of the

Tientsin officials was to cause real affront, but he was always one to think first of his family, and before making any promises, he told the highest official that he wished to allow his family to remain aboard the houseboat for long enough to rest, and then went himself to see the temple which had been renovated and made ready for our occupancy.

Tientsin was like a furnace when we reached the place, and the temple was impossible, more of a furnace even than was Tientsin itself. No windows, damp and ghastly as to smell, no man of independence would have considered it for a moment as a place of residence—though its assignment to Father by Tientsin officials was a great honor. What mattered discomfort, as long as age-old custom was carefully followed?

But Father would have none of it. He went to the Astor House Hotel, and engaged rooms for his family, an unbelievable thing, since the Astor House was frankly a foreign hotel. But he allowed all the rest of our legion to go into the temple. All the time they occupied the temple, they were furnished with free food by Tientsin officials, as we would have been had we lived there. We moved into the Astor House, and had scarcely got comfortably installed there when the highest official in Tientsin came to see Father—and he was quite excited!

“Yü Keng, Yü Keng!” he protested, “this is a foreign-devil hotel!”

Father, the evidence being all against him, admitted that this was so.

"We have a temple all ready for you, and yet you come to this place!"

"I pay for it with my own money, and it is more comfortable for my family!"

"But it is a foreign-devil hotel, and you will be severely criticized! You have just been appointed Minister, and if it gets to Her Majesty that you have flouted the custom, you might lose your new post! You will be severely criticized! Her Majesty might recall you and put you in prison, or decapitate you! It is the custom for visiting officials to accept the hospitality offered by resident officials. You will be severely criticized!"

My father replied very slowly and carefully, and was once more guilty of the rankest heresy.

"I think the custom is silly," he said. "I like this hotel, pay for it, and am going to stay here! As for criticism: I have been criticized at the court a thousand times. People have recommended my decapitation! I have been told so many times that I would lose my position that I know all the reasons by heart, and know, when an official comes to criticize, exactly what he is going to say, and why. But I have never yet lost my job! I have, instead, been promoted! How do you explain that?"

"But the custom—" began the flabbergasted official.

"Is a silly one," retorted Father. "I don't like it, and

refuse to abide by it, and I don't care if my words go back to the court!"

That should have ended the matter, but it didn't. It did not end until we left Tientsin, and the subject was resumed every time we passed through Tientsin thereafter.

But there was one difference about residence in a foreign hotel which was amusing, at least to the foreign guests of the hotel.

Father had given strict orders to his head boy:

"When visitors come to see me here, tell them to be sure not to kowtow!"

More heresy! But in a lobby filled with British, Germans, Americans, and every other nationality under the sun, none of whom regarded the kowtow with reverence, one may readily understand why he did not wish visitors to kowtow. Imagine a visitor kowtowing in a lobby crowded with foreigners, and my father being compelled to return the kowtows!

Of course the inevitable happened, and right when the lobby was crowded! An official came to call, and gave his big red calling card, not to father's "boy" but to one of the hotel boys, who had not been instructed to tell visitors not to kowtow!

Father sank in upon himself like a punctured toy-balloon when the red card came in. Sister and myself were in the lobby with him, as was my brother—together with a host of foreigners with whom my father

had made friends—when in came the official behind his big red calling card! He began yelling at my father as soon as he saw and recognized him, and there in the crowded lobby of the Astor House, went down on his knees and touched his head smartly and loudly to the floor three times! There was nothing for Father to do but return the kowtow. He had been talking politics with the foreigners in their own language, and they had begun to look upon him as a being apart from the rest of his countrymen; but when he went down on his knees and touched his head to the floor three times in answer to the visitor's kowtow—

One man laughed! He was Mr. de Vina, who now lives in Shanghai, and who has been my valued friend now these many years. Not only did he laugh, but he told the reason of his amusement.

"Isn't that silly! Did you ever see anything funnier in your life? Two grown men cracking their heads against the floor!"

Instantly my brother, at the general laugh which followed, walked over to Mr. de Vina.

"Sir," he said calmly in English, "we all understand English, and your laughter is ill-timed! This is a Chinese custom, which you should respect as we respect your customs!"

At once Mr. de Vina, a thorough gentleman—who could blame him for thinking the kowtow funny!—

apologized to my brother, and asked that his apologies be conveyed to Father and to us.

"I should have known better," he said ruefully, "for I heard you speaking English, and should have known you would understand me—and I was an ass to laugh anyway, and showed my ignorance most deplorably!"

What a gorgeous kaleidoscope of colors on the banks of the Pei Ho as we prepared to leave Tientsin! Sedan-chairs of many colors, with rich and costly trappings, lining the banks to watch us go; officials in their flowing, resplendent robes, sampans crowding about to give their owners opportunity to stare at us. Then shouted good-bys, and the drop down-river, out across Taku Bar into the Gulf of Pei Chihli, with Chefoo the next stop.

Here some additional members of the family of one of our secretaries were to come aboard, and most of them were women. It happened as we anchored off Chefoo that the sea was rough. The women came out in sampans, ready to come aboard the gangplank which had been put over. Did you ever try to get aboard a big ship from a small boat when a sea was running? Then imagine what a circus it was when those women, with maimed feet upon which they could scarcely stand on land, tried to get aboard from the decks of bucking sampans, where they had to wait for the gangplank to come into line—now high above their heads, now even,

now below—to make the leap. No wonder the Captains of foreign steamers in those days hated to see Chinese officials come aboard!

The secretary responsible for these women, afraid to trust his precious person on the gangplank, stood at the top and yelled instructions over the side—while my brother watched from the rail and laughed until he wept. The captain saw my brother, and became much exasperated, for which no one could blame him.

“Why do you laugh at your women?” he shouted. “Why don’t you help them aboard?”

My brother sobered at once.

“Sorry, Captain,” he said, “I shouldn’t have laughed; and for your information they are not my women, and I am in no wise interested in them!”

Since they were to join our party, this was hard for the captain to understand.

They got aboard, however, finally, and the journey on to Shanghai was uneventful. But at Shanghai, all the trappings of grandeur were in evidence again, and in greater quantity than I ever before had witnessed.

Officials in gay sedan-chairs as before, as far as the eye could reach. We took a tender out to the steamer, and as the officials stood on the jetty and looked at the tender, one of them, who was of high rank and should have known better, looked at the tender somewhat doubtfully.

“I wouldn’t trust myself on that little boat all the

way to Japan," he said emphatically. "It is too small. And here you are risking your family on it! There's no place to sleep, no place to rest, and the accommodations are simply non-existent. If a minister has to suffer such discomforts as will be yours on this tiny boat, I never wish to be a minister abroad!"

Father explained that this tender was merely going to take us out to the *S. S. Oceana*, anchored in the Whangpoo stream. This was news to the official, and shows the insularity of even important officials in the days of the Empire. But when the officials learned that Father and his family were to travel on a foreign-devil steamer, that made matters even worse! Even today I marvel at the ignorance of old-fashioned Chinese in the matter of places outside their own domains.

One would have thought that every boat in the Whangpoo belonged to us as we dropped down-stream to the *Oceana*. Streamers were flying, and every junk, sampan, and "gunboat," was crowded with people to see us off, and crowded as close to the tender as they could, far closer even than was necessary or safe. But it was what Westerners would characterize as "*some* send-off"!

I cannot resist telling something here that I should perhaps not tell, but which I am going to tell because it will tell something of the Chinese ideas of "foreign devils" in the days of the Empire. Our people, by whom I mean all the myriads of "attachés," did not

trust anything foreign, no matter what it was. While they had been informed that there were accommodations of every kind aboard the *Oceana*, they doubted it—and regarded lavatories as traps to catch unwary Chinese! They thought, moreover, that foreign lavatories were for the use of men and women indiscriminately. So—

Many of the women belonging to the households of our secretaries brought their own accommodations in the shape of unsightly commodes, and these were brought aboard openly, on the arms of slave girls of the households!

You can imagine the mortification which was Mother's, and Father's, too, as these unsightly abominations came aboard before the eyes of thousands—and all her remonstrances could not budge the women from their preconceived ideas. So Mother, as she often did, took the bull by the horns with a vengeance!

She ordered Hung Fang to clean house—her house being all the staterooms occupied by our people!

And Hung Fang did it with a zeal and efficiency which was distinctly Hung Fang-ish! She had been ordered to do things quietly and discreetly, and in a way not to attract attention, for all the people aboard the sampans were waiting until we should up-anchor and drop down-stream for the voyage to Japan, and all eyes were raised to the rails to watch us until we left.

When the unsightly nuisances brought aboard by the

secretaries' slave girls began to go crashing through port-holes and from lower decks, to splash into the Whang-poo, and there to bob up and down like bell buoys, under the eyes of thousands, even staid Chinese laughed at the sight—and the foreigners aboard the *Oceana*—well, imagine!

But we were finally away on the voyage for which I had been wishing. I hadn't known until now that I had been dissatisfied with life in China, nor realized that I was homesick for foreign countries, since I had spent most of my young life so far outside of China. I was ready for any voyage, to any country, and Japan was as good as any other.

Later I shall tell of the trials and tribulations of a minister traveling on the high seas, with all his retinue; but I forbear this time, because there are other journeys to follow, and to detail this one would not be to do the subject entire justice.

But we arrived in Japan—

Did I mention that among our retinue was a certain tutor out of Honan, who had not been left behind at Sha-Ssu, Wu Chang, Hankow, or Peking?

XVII

"CHAN CHAN BO ZU"

WE had reached Japan. We were ashore in Kobe, and had taken rooms in the Oriental Hotel. We were to go right on to Tokyo, and Father sent his secretaries ahead to secure rooms for us at the Imperial Hotel. We had been told that the journey by boat from Kobe to Yokohama was always terribly rough, which had caused Father to arrange to go by train. And what a slow train it was! Father arranged for an entire car for the family, while the servants and "attachés" were herded into another car.

We went aboard at night. There were no sleeping accommodations, and we were to sit up all night, knowing which Father had arranged for a car to ourselves, so that we could be as comfortable as possible.

There were no cross seats, as in Western trains, but a long bench on either side of the car, so that we sat facing one another across the aisle, along which, traveling from car to car and back again, went a never-ending stream of passengers, for whom we had continually to be drawing back our feet.

"Chan chan bo zu! Chan chan bo zu!"

Japanese stuck their heads into the car, looked us over from head to foot, and made this remark among themselves. I didn't know what it meant, and neither did any other member of the family, and our Chinese-Japanese interpreters understood no Japanese—though we had brought them along to perform this service.

“Chan chan bo zu! Chan chan bo zu!”

I heard the words so many times that they rang through my brain like some unnerving litany. There was something menacing and derisive in the words, and we all realized that they meant something derogatory. I memorized them—how could I help it, hearing them so many times?—and promised myself that they should be the first Japanese words to which I would seek the meaning in some language I knew. Now, of course, I know their meaning, and was destined to know it within a week after I had first heard them. This, then, was the meaning of them:

“Pigtails! Pigtails! Shaved heads! Shaved heads!”

It is very much as though queue-wearing folk out of old China were to visit America, and be trailed by hordes of mischievous boys, yelling, “Chinks! Chinks! Chinks!”

Though, as I say, we did not understand the words, we sensed the meaning, and knew that Japan resented our presence in their country. We were enemies. A war had just been brought to a close, a war between these

people and our people, and we were the first of our people to go among them after the cessation of hostilities. They didn't like us, and wished us to know it.

So—

"Chan chan bo zu! Chan chan bo zu!"

But despite the inimical attitude of the Japanese, I fell in love instantly with Japan. It was a beautiful place. Beautiful costumes, the little terraced gardens on the hills, the men and women wearing their clogs, the women their *obi*, and walking with their queer stoop-shouldered way, their faces like those of mechanical dolls. All Japanese women, it seemed to me, were beautiful, and looked like dolls, or like candy-people, made to eat. And so polite, at least to each other. Later, when we had made many friends among them, their politeness to us was just as excessive.

The indrawn breathing when a Japanese addressed another, or any person whom he respected—and he at least pretended to respect all—seemed funny to me at first, like the hissing of serpents. But the indrawn breath had a meaning among the Japanese, a meaning that may be put into words, as though the one who spoke had actually said them:

"I am a lowly person. I am not worthy for my humble breath to blow upon you!"

So, instead of breathing toward the person addressed, the Japanese sucked in the breath audibly, as though he would have used the words quoted above.



JAPANESE STUCK THEIR HEADS INTO THE CAR AND LOOKED US OVER FROM HEAD TO FOOT

That ride to Tokyo was extremely trying. For in Japan of that day, as in Japan and China of today, the railroads were exceedingly popular, and people who could afford tickets anywhere seemed to pack the passenger coaches always. So all cars were packed, and the Japanese who looked in upon us, and noted that one family had an entire car, resented the fact that we had such accommodations, quite despite the fact that we had paid for them.

First they came to the end of the car and looked in, then turned and spoke to one another with the inevitable words:

“Chan chan bo zu! Chan chan bo zu!”

Then they moved on into our car. We knew no Japanese, they knew no Chinese, and so they could not talk to us. But we did know English, and tried to explain to them.

“This car is engaged! Engaged! Engaged!”

While they perhaps did not understand us, they could tell much from our gestures, and our attitude of resentment at intrusion upon privacy for which we had paid in the coin of Japan. But one man knew some English, and since all Japanese, even today, wish at every opportunity to air their knowledge of foreign languages whenever and wherever possible, he tried to explain things to us in that language.

“Cars all crowded (ssss! ssss!)! Sssss! SSssss! Must come in! Ssss! Must come in!”

"This car is engaged! This car is engaged and paid for!" we told them, but—

"Ssss! Very sorrow for you! Very sorrow for you! Sssss! Very sorrow! Must come in! Sssss!"

All this with much bowing and humility, while eyes, filled with resentment against the *chan chan bo zu*, peered out at us to belie the humility and self-abasement of the speakers!

Come into our car the Japanese did, and no appeals to any officials on the train could straighten the matter out, since all the officials sympathized with their own kind—this being a characteristic of the Japanese, who always take the attitude that the Japanese are right, the outlander wrong. So we had to resign ourselves to lack of privacy, which was all the more undesirable because the Japanese going a-traveling, and with some hours ahead of him, invariably takes up all the room he possibly can, usually stripping down to his underthings in plain view of all, draping his clothes all over area which might be occupied by passengers, and making himself generally comfortable at the expense of others. This frank disrobing on the part of Japanese, as natural to them as the rising and setting of the sun, made us all uncomfortable and abashed, which would doubtless have surprised the Japanese had they known.

And when the Japanese had settled themselves in our car, they began their clacking of tongues, which even in

the sleeping cars of present day Japan, never ceases. They stared at us frankly, and we could tell without knowing a word of Japanese that they were discussing us just as frankly. Sssss! Ssssss! *Chan chan bo zu!* Ssss! Ssss!

Those hateful words: “pigtails! pigtails!”

But an end must be made some time, and we would arrive, as I recall, in Tokyo the next afternoon. Excuse me if this is incorrect, as I am trying to gather these threads from my memories as a girl, rather than going to books of reference to study geographical facts. All the way to Tokyo, the Japanese seldom took their eyes off us. The eternal hissing, the indrawing of breath, and the words, *chan chan bo zu!*

But all things, even unpleasant things, come to an end in time, and in time we reached Tokyo. Our secretaries met us at the station, and a landau had been engaged to take us to the Imperial Hotel. It was really a gorgeous equipage, and our secretaries were very proud of it. Attending our carriage were four Japanese policemen, who moved away from the carriage as we approached, and took their places in jinrikshas, each pulled by one coolie and pushed by another, and these four policemen followed closely behind the landau which took us to the hotel.

There was a great crowd at the station, for word must have gone ahead that we were coming. As in China,

there are no secrets in Japan, especially as regards foreigners; for every Japanese, almost, is an employee of the government, with or without pay, and every move by a foreigner is recorded and reported to their department of intelligence. The gaping crowd which watched us debark from the train again took up the hateful refrain:

"Chan chan bo zu! Chan chan bo zu!"

This time there was no mistaking the derision in the incomprehensible words. The Japanese did not like us, and were voicing their disapproval. Much of the voiced disapproval of us came from the hissing lips of Japanese high school children, aided and abetted by their elders, who did not stop or chide them.

Japan did not like us, but I at least liked Japan, though not her people. They followed us from the station, and crowds gathered all along the way, many of the people hurling rocks and sticks at us—fortunately their aim not being as good as their intentions!—and repeating over and over again:

"Chan chan bo zu! Chan chan bo zu!"

Behind us followed the four policemen, looking very important, and their presence annoyed my father intensely.

"They follow us as though we were criminals!" said Father in exasperation. But since we could not understand their words, nor they ours, we didn't know until

later why they followed us. They did make some effort to keep the crowd back far enough from us that their sticks and stones did not reach us, though the hateful four words did. It was my first venture into hostile territory, and I must admit that it all thrilled me. I had never before encountered people who hissed like snakes, who bowed and bent so frequently, or who said the same four words so many times, and were so politely venomous.

Then we passed into Tokyo, where the first thing I saw which puzzled me were the various walls. In China, the walls I had known had always been of brick, placed regularly in uniform design; in Japan I first encountered the stone walls, with the irregular facing to accommodate the different sizes of the stones, and wondered much as to how they managed, in spite of the different sizes of the stones, to make the top and bottom of their walls even.

Then we reached the Imperial Hotel, where we intended staying until the Chinese Legation should be made ready for our occupancy.

Having been properly accommodated, in the midst of much hissing, bowing and scraping, we went out to view the city, and everywhere we went those four policemen followed us. Father learned next day that they had been assigned for our protection, because Japan had not yet forgotten the China-Japan war, and that we were

fresh from the enemy. The policemen were there to prevent our being badly injured, and they succeeded admirably.

But it took some time to cure our injured feelings when we finally learned the true meaning of—

"Chan chan bo zu!"

XVIII

LEGATION ECHOES

AND this was the day set aside for our journey to the Chinese Legation which was to be our home for an indefinite period. The Legation, of course, had been deserted by previous occupants when Japan and China went to war. We were to be the first to go back to it.

We left the hotel and entered our proud landau, to discover the inevitable four policemen waiting for us, to escort us to our home, as official jinriksha-outriders, and set out on the journey. What a thrilling ride that was for me, even though those hateful four words followed us wherever we went. We became accustomed to them after a time, since we knew we had to remain in Japan, and Father set himself the task of making friends with the Japanese, making them forget that we were *chan chan bo zu*, and he was already beginning the fight. You know, if you smile at your enemy, and keep on smiling, no matter how badly he uses you, he will himself eventually smile out of very sympathy; and when both sides smile enmity has vanished.

It seemed to me that we passed through a veritable labyrinth to reach our destination. We passed through several walls, to which I could see neither beginning nor

end. They seemed made to impede progress, and to make it impossible for us to see very far ahead. We merely went through one wall—which was that strange sort of wall I have before mentioned, made of irregularly shaped stones instead of bricks as in China, and was high enough to hide our landau from anyone who might be beyond the walls—and turned to the right, or maybe it was left, while the *beto*, called in China “little mafoo,” or horse-boy, jumped down and led the horses, looking like a particularly active little monkey as he went over the wheel to do his duty. It was always the task of the *beto* to lead the horses in difficult places, after which he would clamber back again, and sit proudly, and not a little important, beside the driver. Through the first opening in the wall, a turn to the right, a difficult turn because we went through the opening to come head on against another wall which compelled the turn to the right, after which we turned to the left again, and so through the wall which had faced us—the *beto* leading the horses all the way, because it was close driving to keep from colliding with the walls—only to face another wall. At this point I become confused entirely, and forget whether the turns were right or left, and memory is just a confused jumble of walls and more walls, from which we finally emerged into a narrow street flanked by the doll houses of the Japanese—emerged from the labyrinth of walls with a sigh of relief at escape from a suffocating web which

seemed to have been spun by the genii to entrap human beings, with especial reference to the *chan chan bo zu*.

How tiny and frail the houses which faced each other across the streets—doll houses, to shelter the doll women of Japan. Today the ladies were out in force, walking in their queer jerky manner, stooped of shoulders, with their inevitable bundles across the hips in the shape of the *obi*, their feet fastened with thongs between the toes to the *geta*, or clogs, which caused a never-ending *clack-ing* sound. To people who have been to Japan, and have passed through, say, Motomachi in Kobe, one has but to mention the name to bring back to such visitors the *clackity-clacking*, *clackity-clacking*, of the *geta* on rainy days, a drumming river of sound without end as the *geta* make their music when the little folk of Japan go a-walking.

Doll houses for doll people, tiny houses which seemed so frail a wind would have blown them away, little hives for the busy bees of Japan. One had but to see the houses, with the *geta* and sandals outside, to know what one would find inside. The inevitable mats, the floors over which it were sacrilege to wear shoes, and doll women in the midst of their playhouses, sitting around the charcoal burners, called *hibachi*, warming fragile hands and fragile bodies, and smiling little set smiles.

Up hill and down we traveled, and always there were the little houses, the little women who seldom seemed to smile, at least to us, the men who seemed consumed

with curiosity about us, and the young people who hurled at us those hateful four words. Behind us the four policemen in their jinrikshas, before us the big *mafoo* and the little *mafoo*, or *beto*, riding high and proudly above us who sat ensnared in the body of the landau. Up hill, the horses laboring, down hill, with the *beto* leading the animals, forcing them to hold back the landau.

Then, at long last, we reached *Kochimachiku nagatacho nichome nibanchi*—all of which seeming gibberish is merely the street address of the Chinese Legation!—and saw the foreign-built house which was the main building of the legation, over the top of the red brick wall which surrounded the legation. To me it somehow looked like a prison, for down the wall a way, where the gate pierced through, were the iron palings of the gate, studded with spikes of iron at the top, looking as formidable as the gates to any castle built to withstand a siege.

One of the policemen got down from his jinriksha to open the iron gate, and the gate was very rusty—like the gate of a cemetery which is no longer used or cared for. It shrieked aloud in dismal protest as the policeman swung it wide, and the *beto* led the horses through, into the winding road which led up the hill to the *porte cochère* at the front of the legation.

What a dismal place! When war had broken out, the former occupants of our legation in Japan had fled in

fear for their lives, deserting a ship they thought to be sinking, and now the whole area inside the walls was smothered in weeds which grew as tall as myself. The likeness to a cemetery increased, and, had I stepped down from the landau to go for a walk through the grounds, I would not have been surprised to discover weather-stained headstones among the weeds. But, noting everything, and making plans to repair the damages to this really fine place, we rode on up to the front of the legation.

Already I, who loved gardens, and flowers, and trees, and the birds which came to build their nests, was visualizing this place as it would be when we had turned it upside down. Just inside the walls, to the left of the gate as we entered, were the houses set apart for our "attachés," secretaries and their families, while a sea of weeds stretched almost unbroken from the doors of these little houses, up over the knoll to the door of the legation. But I could still see how the place would look when the gardeners had finished with it. Right before the legation door was a rounded knoll which would be a flower garden, all sorts of flowers ringing about and about the base of the pine tree in the center of the knoll. The weeds should be cut away from the walks which wound through them, now lost almost to sight in the weed-jungle, and the place would become the miniature fairyland it had once been.

Then we stepped out, minds rioting with plans which

we discussed as we moved, discussed in broken snatches of conversation, because we walked as we talked, and had no sooner started speaking of some improvement *here*, than we had reached *there*, and some other improvement suggested itself to us for discussion; so that the whole result of that first visit, as far as my memory is concerned, is merely a confusion of sounds, sights, and odors.

We opened the door, which was unlocked, as it had been left by those who fled, and immediately were assailed by that musty odor which comes to buildings which have been deserted and uncared for for some time—a terrible odor, damp, musty, and redolent of decay. Then we were inside, moving from room to room. This legation had been a grand place, and would be again. A great hall first, swimming with that odor of decay and desolation. Old clothing mildewing on the floors, clothing which had been dropped by the fugitives from the believed-prospective wrath of the outraged Japanese. Shoes scattered here and there, no two shoes being pairs, overturned chairs and tables—almost as though the Japanese *had* come, too late to catch the legation folk, but not too late to wreak their fury on what the Chinese had left behind.

Dust was over everything, on moldings, chandeliers—everywhere. The tiny prints of mice and rats were in the dust on the floors, but no human footprints save those we ourselves were making. A huge place, this, a

building of two stories, erected by the Empire with an eye to the grandeur of Her Majesty's Ministers abroad.

In one room we found the remains of a meal. Remnants of food on plates, tea grounds black in the caddy, tea all black and terrible in tiny cups, muddy residue to turn the stomach, proving that the Chinese had left precipitately indeed.

I have only once in my life visited a place so disheartening, so dispiriting, as this Chinese Legation before it had been renovated and entirely put to rights; this one place was that part of the Forbidden City which was the last stronghold of the famous Boy Emperor, who left the city so swiftly at the command of the Christian General that he, too, left his breakfast behind, where it remains today, molding there, even to the package of Uneeda biscuits upon which he seems to have been frugally breaking his fast when the ultimatum came.

In other rooms we found beds unmade, the bed clothing thrown back, dank, moldy and filthy. Confusion everywhere, the whole place seeming almost to echo to the flying footfalls of the rats deserting the ship, and to the frightened cries of those who had feared they would not escape in time. Then, on through to the rear, where there were three other small houses against the rear wall of the great compound, these, too, being for legation folk.

It seemed that we had a task for our best efforts. We

had to begin at the bottom, setting our house to rights, putting it in order. In a way it was symbolical, for Her Majesty had set my father a greater task that was much the same—he had to put China's house in order in Japan, restore confidence between the two countries, and had to do it with those four hateful words, *chan chan bo zu*, ringing perpetually in his ears.

One thing I have failed to mention of the journey from the Imperial Hotel to the Chinese Legation—we passed close enough to the Imperial Palace to see something of it, and my most lasting impression of that first ride, as far as the palace was concerned, was that it was far inferior to China's palaces in the Forbidden City, though it seemed to have been copied from our own palaces. It was not so grand, and the colors were more subdued, or lacking altogether. Red, which is found everywhere in real Chinese architecture, seemed lacking entirely in this palace.

It looked, in short, as though an architect had made a hurried trip to China, gazed upon one of China's greatest palaces, taken no notes at all, made no sketches whatever, and had returned to Japan to set down in wood what he had seen—with about the success attendant upon the efforts of imitators. Yet he achieved greatness just the same, for his labors seemed to typify the ponderous solemnity of the Empire of Japan, and this ponderous aura seemed to cling to the place like a borrowed mantle to the shoulders, ill fitting, in a way, but lending

dignity because of the greatness even of the imitation. I remembered the story my father had told me, about the Chinese family lost at sea, who had reached Japan and become the parents of this new race, and it then seemed right and reasonable that Japan's architecture should partake of the architecture of China, the real cradle of the race. This new race lived faster, that was all, and the little touches of color, the little lines of her architecture, they simply hadn't time for.

We had made a beginning. My father was determined to go on through, smiling but determined, putting *his* house in order, putting China's house in order, closing the rifts in national friendship, making friends for himself and for China—and what follows will show how well he succeeded.

XIX

BEDLAM

WE spent two weeks at the Imperial Hotel, while waiting for the legation to be prepared for us. We had set a crew of Japanese carpenters to work upon the huge building, and hoped that two weeks would see us settled.

Since Father had to make all his official calls, upon Japanese officials and other foreign ministers, he was away much of the time, taking with him the only one of our seven interpreters who could interpret. This left the family in the hotel, surrounded by that most terrible barrier—inability to speak the current language—and those two weeks at the Imperial Hotel were a never-ending nightmare.

In those days, few Japanese spoke English, while today they all at least try, and annoy every tourist with impertinent questions which are in no wise intended to be impertinent, but which they ask simply for the purpose of exercising their command of English. Today the use of English in Japan is deplored by tourists, but then we would have been glad, for we had a really appalling time. The Japanese hotel attendants knew no English, and though they nodded and hissed whenever

we spoke to them, they understood not even the simplest words, like "come," "go," "here," etc. We might as well have been in some enemy prison.

Father would be gone all day, and would tell of his experiences when he returned home. Sometimes we would journey to the legation to see how the work was going on, and one of these visits I remember most clearly. We wanted a certain room partitioned. We hired a Japanese carpenter to do the work, and took with us one of our would-be interpreters to tell the man what we wished.

This is the conversation which took place between our interpreter and the carpenter:

"*Kore! Kore!*" said the interpreter, making many signs with his waving arms. He was showing the carpenter exactly where the partition was to go, he told us, and giving him all the details of construction. Even I marveled at the amount of detail covered by a single Japanese word, for "*kore*" was the only word used by the interpreter, no matter what we told him to tell the carpenter.

"*Kore! Kore!*" said the interpreter.

"Sssss! Sssss!" replied the carpenter, bowing in deep humility and grinning from ear to ear.

"The partition must be so high," said Mother, "and must turn at right angles here."

"*Kore! Kore!*" said the interpreter to the carpenter.

"Sssss! Sssss!" replied the carpenter.

"Everything is arranged," said the interpreter to us, "and the partition will soon be in!"

And the partition *was* in when we made our next impatient visit to the legation; but it was not of the right height, did not have a right-angled turn, was unpainted and poorly constructed—and in the wrong room!

Back at the hotel, when we asked for ice water, and made all the signs we could think of, we would receive deep bows from the attendant who had answered our summons, who would immediately rush away and bring us a helping of watermelon. If we asked for watermelon we got iced tea or a cordial. If we asked for a cordial they made down our beds, exhibiting polite surprise because we were retiring in the middle of the day. We asked for meals to be sent up and got our bill because the hotel people understood that we were checking out. Two weeks of this, which seems humorous now, but which then was terrible.

There were humorous touches however, in reports brought home by my father, who was making his rounds of official calls. Even today, I remember some of the names of the various ministers.

There was d'Anethan, Minister of Belgium, who was a Baron in his own right. He was extremely short, extremely fat, and quite old. His wife was very thin and very tall, and they were very amusing when seen together.

There was Sir Ernest Satow, Minister from England,

who was very dignified and grave, yet who had a sense of humor not ordinarily found in an Englishman. Father and he became very good friends later. Sir Ernest was a bachelor. He was tall and thin, and his moustache, which showed part of his lip under the nostrils, made him look very distinguished. He was a great scholar, speaking Japanese like a native. A thorough gentleman.

There was Mr. Harmond, the French Minister, who had a "bay window," a bristling moustache. Father always said Mr. Harmond reminded him of a butcher. He spoke French, was proud of the fact that he knew no other languages, and would have refused to speak any other had he been gifted with them all. His wife was the proper southern France type, quite dark, rather stout, and wore clothes which would have been characterized even today as "loud." I distinctly remember that I delighted to watch her because her bust was huge, and all covered with lace. She made me think of an old-fashioned pin cushion. They had a daughter named Annette, about sixteen years of age, who was a very willful child, who had a dream of marrying a rich man, and intended to consider no one who had less than a million—whether francs, dollars or yen not specified. She resembled her mother, of whom she was practically a pocket edition.

Prince Hitrouvo represented Russia. He was elderly, exceedingly good-looking and gracious. He was very

nice to me, and I thought a great deal of him. He had a grown-up son, who was even handsomer than his father, a great linguist, and a real charmer among the ladies. The Russian Legation was the richest and best among the legations, and the most lavish in its entertainments, and the Prince and his son lived up to the best traditions of the most showy court in the world of that time—Russia in the time of the Czars.

Count Orfini represented Italy. He was short and fat, and bald, save for a tuft of hair on the back of his head. This hair he eked out as best he could, by combing it forward to cover his baldness; but he fooled no one, not even himself. He was a bachelor, a social lion over whom the legation ladies made much.

Mr. Lisboa was Minister from Brazil. He was of medium height, very distinguished in appearance. He spoke beautiful French and English, and other languages I knew nothing about, an excellent linguist by report. Madame Lisboa was an excellent mate for her husband, devoted to him and to his interests, proud of the career he was making for himself, and dressed with good taste, as became a minister's wife. They had two daughters and a son, all grown up. The daughters were very accomplished, being linguists and musicians of passing note. The son was a nice boy, a great dancer, socially correct.

In the Spanish Legation I remember only Mr. Carcer, who was Secretary to the Minister, whose name I do not

recall, and whose face even is blurred with the passage of time. I remember Mr. Carcer especially, because I was exceedingly fond of his daughter Carmen. Mr. Carcer later became Spanish Minister to Peking.

Mr. De Fretas—I'm not sure of the spelling—was Minister from Portugal, and later represented his little country in Peking. Madame de Fretas was a very beautiful woman, dressed always in the latest Parisian mode, and was exceedingly popular in diplomatic social circles.

There were many others of whom I remember little, and whose names have escaped me; but I especially remember the German Minister, Herr Kutschmidt, because of an amusing feature of my father's formal call upon him, which Father related to us when he returned. Father took with him his interpreters, as he did when he called on any of the ministers whose language he did not know, unless he was sure they spoke either French or English; although in this case the German Minister had assured him that interpreters were unnecessary, because he spoke my father's language!

The German Minister, after Father had been announced and admitted, and had taken a chair, addressed him immediately, with a great show of cordiality.

"My thinkee you likee catchee stop Japan-side. You catchee maybe one-piece rough voyage China-side this-side?"

My father stared at the Minister in amazement, scarcely knowing how to relieve a situation which might

easily become embarrassing—not to Father, who knew how little outlanders knew about Chinese and Manchus, and thus was lenient, but to the German Minister when he understood his *faux pas*. For a moment Father did not answer.

The German Minister continued.

"Oh, my savee! You no savee English talkee! Well, my no savee Chinaman talkee! We go catchee two-piece interpreter-man!"

Father then turned to his own interpreter.

"Will you please inform His Excellency," he said gravely in English, "that I understand no German? If he will address me in English or French, I shall assuredly understand him!"

What followed immediately afterward may be left to the imagination. It was one of Father's pet stories in the years which followed.

I have neglected to mention Mr. Dunn, the American Minister, but it is just a careless oversight. Mr. Dunn and Father became fast friends, and the family memories of Mr. Dunn are all pleasant ones.

Father, at the end of two weeks of bedlam at the Imperial Hotel, had made tremendous strides toward setting China's house in order, and when we finally went to the renovated legation, it was with the knowledge, on Father's part, that though his task might be difficult, he was well on the way to accomplishing what he wished to accomplish.

THE LEGATION OPENING

WHAT a relief it was to get away from the Imperial Hotel, where no one understood us, and we understood no one! And how changed the legation, after all the work which had been done upon it. It seemed that at long last—those two weeks had been two centuries—our troubles were over. But they had just begun, in far better surroundings, however, for in the renovated legation we would have our own family circle, our own servants to wait upon us, and our own home to which we would soon become accustomed, since we were to live there for four years.

We were handicapped, of course, by the fact that we understood no Japanese, for diplomats began to return Father's formal calls. It became immediately apparent that we needed a Japanese butler who spoke Chinese, French or English, the whole family knowing those three languages. So we started seeking a Japanese butler. We had five of them the first week!

The first one looked down upon our Chinese servants, and wanted to be the master of the household, though we had engaged him for the sole duty of opening the

door to visitors and ushering them in. This butler was continually fighting with the Chinese servants, who would have none of him. He knew nothing of caste among the Chinese, and treated the number one boy exactly as he treated the kitchen coolies, and neither the number one boy nor the kitchen coolies would entertain it for a moment.

So the butler left, highly indignant at everyone.

We engaged another one. He turned up his nose at Chinese food, and came to Mother with the plea that he be assigned a corner of the kitchen in which he might prepare his own meals of rice and beans, because, he said, Chinese food was too greasy for him.

"There is plenty of room in the kitchen," said Mother. "Pick out a place and cook your own meals!"

That seemed to settle things, and everything was all right until one of our servants decided that it was time we knew about the dreadful crimes being committed by the Japanese butler. Just for experiment, it seemed, the butler had tried some of our Chinese food—and was robbing our plates of food before the plates came up to us! Evidently his antipathy toward Chinese food had been more or less imagination. But the Japanese butler, while we didn't mind the food he had pilfered, had offended the Chinese servants, who looked upon theft of food as a most ghastly crime—unless they were the thieves!—and we had to change butlers again.

As I say, we had five the first week, and all because none of us spoke Japanese. So, your reporter decided to learn Japanese, and communicated her desire to the rest of the family, all of whom suddenly decided to learn Japanese, with the exception of Father, who had no patience with the language.

So much for petty details.

The legation had been cleaned from top to bottom, and now seemed the most gorgeous place we had ever occupied. Floors had been polished until they shone. Weeds had been eliminated from the compound, and the garden of my dreams had begun to take form. You will remember the pine tree before the door?

It was under the umbrella of this great tree where the garden bloomed into being, and it was an inspiration in landscape gardening, of which the Japanese are masters. The tree was in the center, huge, towering, and the knoll which it centered was perhaps fifty feet across. Our Japanese gardener had outdone himself to build in the shadow of the tree a little fairyland for me—he didn't build it for me, but I took it for my own. It was a countryside, and a crowded one, in miniature. There were little Japanese houses, no bigger than the hand of a child, little Japanese pagodas hanging precariously to the sides of hills no higher than my own ankles. Tiny walks made for the dancing feet of fairies, bordering a huge ocean in which mammoths of the sea

in the shape of iridescent goldfish sported among the submerged grasses in a pond one could step across. There were little pine trees, real ones! no higher than the pagodas, growing out of the tops of mountainous rocks the size of a Chinese belle's feet. There were whole mountain ranges over which a Gulliver, nine, or ten, or eleven years old, could peer with ease, and there was moss in the mountains, strange and stringy, and velvety to the touch.

How often in those few days would I stand under the monster pine tree, which so terribly dwarfed my garden, my back against the tree, and people all my garden with people of the proper size. There were doll-like Japanese great ladies, the size of one's little finger, Chinese little ladies on their absurdly tiny, broken feet, be-robed be-gowned Chinese and Japanese men, clicking along the winding paths on *geta* and sandals, all nationalities I had known, mingled together, all in perfect amity, eager to please the great Gulliver-like *me* who leaned against the great tree and saw them all so plainly—though they were not there.

They all spoke my language, these people in the garden, and had been thoroughly grounded in Chinese, French and English, which they spoke with no more accent than I myself. But they would fly to the safety of their houses at the slightest excuse, such as the sudden calling of Hung Fang, demanding to know where in the world Der Ling was hiding, or demanding if she had

gone again a-mooning. They didn't like Hung Fang, these people of mine; but then I didn't like her, either, which perhaps explains it. I told all of them all about her, and perhaps I sort of prejudiced them against her.

One day, how plainly I remember, when I stood against the great tree and conversed with my Lilliputian subjects, a great shadow seemed to creep across the compound, and across my garden. Then something dreadful happened! The tree against my back shook and trembled. The earth under my feet shook and swayed. Frightened cries of real people came plainly to me over the compound walls. Doors slammed in the legation. Frightened voices of our servants. One of the mountain ranges in the garden tried to tumble down, and didn't, though some of the velvety moss fell off and almost buried one of the walks. It was an earthquake, and I remained there, stunned and frightened, only long enough to see all my people, Chinese, Japanese, Manchus, French, British, German, and all the others, scurry at top speed to their little houses, which they entered madly, slamming all the doors behind them. Then I ran for home myself, and crashed my own door to.

I didn't like earthquakes at all. Many years later another earthquake shook down the legation—but you have read about that one, and it doesn't matter here.

People were coming now to the legation to call on Father, and all my old curiosity about everybody returned. It was a different curiosity now, because all the

people were new, and strange, and different; their customs and habits were not the customs and habits of China, but they were those to which I was most accustomed, because I had lived in Europe, and knew little about China anyway.

New and rich furniture had been placed in the different rooms of the legation. A ball must be given. It was expected of us, and Her Majesty, away across the ocean in China, wished her ministers abroad to behave in a way that would bring the proper kind of notice, and the proper respect, to China through her legations. There were chandeliers whose illumination rivaled that of the stars, and these caused pools of light and shadow on the polished floors, wrought dancing figures on the shadowed walls when the chandeliers swayed under the touch of servants' hands. There were stairways leading up out of gloomy wells into lighted areas where other chandeliers hung in hallways; black places under the stairs where goblins hid and reached forth evil hands to grasp the queues of Manchu little girls who were naughty or ventured too close.

But what should I know about the interior of a great house which I never entered except for meals and at bedtime? I loved the compound better, and my garden, which latter I loved only more than the flagpole just inside the gate. One day there were children to play with us—from whom we learned much Japanese, as

children learn languages easily—and I herded them all to the flagpole.

It was set high on a rampart of bricks, out of which the flagpole grew. Up the pole ran a rope ladder, up to a little platform, narrow, small, and precarious under the feet, beyond which the pole narrowed down until the peak was reached, and to the peak was fastened, during the day, the yellow flag and the blue dragon with the white scales, of the Empire.

There was a little railing around the platform, and the platform was perhaps twenty feet above the ground. Of course the inevitable happened, and I dared my friends, my brother and sister, to climb the flagpole with me, leading the way myself.

I was nicely ensconced on the platform when Father's secretary came by and saw me. He stopped stock-still, staring upward.

"Come down from there this instant!" he commanded.

"I will not!" I said impudently. "I'll have you to know that what I do is none of your business!"

"Come down instantly!" he repeated, stamping his foot.

"I wish to inform you that this is *my* legation!" I snapped at him. "My flag, *my* platform, *my* railing, *my* flagpole—and you are only my father's secretary!"

"That pole and that flag belong to the Chinese Gov-

ernment!" retorted the secretary with the usual insolence of secretaries who don't appreciate the importance of their masters' children. "It is bad luck for girls to climb Chinese flagpoles!"

"Oh, all right!" I suddenly gave in to him, and started climbing down, with a speed that must have made the secretary gasp. The rest of the children remained at the base of the pole, while I went a-hunting. When I had finished my search, and I was talking all the time, I came back to the pole, below which the secretary still waited, and started climbing up again. The secretary did not know that my clothes were filled with pebbles, until I started raining them down upon him from the safe haven of the flagpole platform. Then he fled, pursued by hoots from the girl on the platform, and the screams of laughter of the audience. I shouldn't have been proud of my achievement, but I was—moreover, looking back, I still am! proud of my aim, my ability to climb flagpoles, and to hurl pebbles at uppity secretaries, hanging by one hand while in action, to show them a secretary's place in the household of a minister with growing children!

Days of play. Hours of enchantment. Glorious dreams at the foot of the pine tree. No lessons to get. Japanese made easy because Japanese children came to play and to talk their language with all the fluency of childhood—and then—

Into this haven of enchantment came the tutor from

Honan, together with a tutor of Japanese, and, announcing their arrival, the hateful voice of Hung Fang, the slave girl who acted like a mistress of everything.

“Lessons start again tomorrow at eight o’clock!”

The sun went out, and the sky was darkened; but we were definitely settled at last.

SIGNALS OF DECORUM

BACK at Sha-Ssu there had been the teakwood panels from behind which I had spied upon the doings of people who came to see my father. At Wu Chang there had been panels, or screens, from the safe haven of which a girl child of nine, filled with all the insatiable curiosity of childhood, could see what went forward.

At Tokyo there was a Japanese screen, and from behind it I shamelessly watched what happened at our legation. Why not? There was no harm in it, and what I saw remained to me in memories I like to recall. I was too young to take part in anything of a social nature, yet I yearned for those things just the same.

So whenever opportunity offered, I hid behind the Japanese screen, among the shadows where none would see me, still as a mouse so that none would hear; and little missed my eyes or my ears.

People came to call and were offered tea and cakes, and I watched with both eyes wide open, because the people actually drank the tea and ate the cakes! Of course *we* had always accepted hospitality whenever we went anywhere, for the Manchus did that; but in China, the Chinese did not regard it as polite.

I watched people call, drink their tea and eat their cakes, and recalled a memorable call at Sha-Ssu of a Chinese lady of high degree, who came in on her absurdly deformed feet which in those days were signs of beauty. This woman at Sha-Ssu came in and sat for almost an hour without saying why she came, though of course we guessed. It was not polite to come right out and state one's business without verbal circumlocutions, and this lady of my remembrance had no light conversation. So she merely sat for an hour, saying nothing.

Food was served her, in the Chinese manner. Tea was brought, and many things to eat, and everybody gathered around the table. As is the Chinese custom, everybody pressed food upon the guest, loading her plate, each depositing food on her plate with his or her own chopsticks. Yet the lady sat, said nothing, and ate nothing.

"Please eat!" said Mother.

"Please eat!" said Father.

But though the food, tasty, as good as any that could be prepared in China, because we had the best cooks to be had outside the Forbidden City—was piled high on her plate, she would eat nothing. Had my people not known the Chinese custom—which I at that time did not know—they would have been mortally offended at her, thinking she was afraid to eat our food for fear of

poison, bad cooking or something else equally undesirable.

"Please eat!" said Father.

"Please eat!" said Mother.

While I watched the whole proceeding, and my mouth fairly ached for the food this Chinese lady scorned, the lady ate nothing, until Father and Mother pressed her so much she finally lifted her chopsticks, took up the tiniest of tiny morsels, placed it in her mouth—and chewed upon it for exactly half an hour by our various clocks!

I couldn't understand it, but I did find out later.

It was a Chinese idea. If one goes to the house of a friend, and food is offered, and one partakes of it freely, it is a signal that there is not sufficient food in one's own house, and that one is hungry! So among the Chinese, it was the politest thing *not* to eat!

Then, after the dishes had been cleared away, and the lady had sat for still another hour, saying nothing beyond the fact that she had enjoyed the food and hospitality tremendously—having eaten that single morsel—she prepared to take her departure. Then and then only did she state the reason for her visit.

"You have a good salary from the government," she said. "I have a cousin who is very poor. Out of your abundance will you make him a monthly payment of only twenty dollars?"

Father agreed to do this instantly, as was the Chinese

custom, and thereafter the twenty dollars a month were paid as faithfully as though Father had really owed the money which, according to the Chinese custom, he *did* as soon as he had agreed; and to fail to agree would have been a rank discourtesy! As far as I know, Father never saw this cousin of the Chinese lady.

So when foreigners called upon Father, I watched the things they did, and contrasted them with the things my own people did. Because of this it is perhaps not strange that I am really more of a cosmopolite than a Manchu or Chinese. Our home, save that we wore the clothing of our own people—until the time came when we took to “foreign” clothing—was like an American, French or British home; though I never was at loss to fit in easily with my own people, whether they were North Chinese, speaking the Mandarin which is the only dialect I know thoroughly, or Cantonese whose language I understand somewhat, yet do not speak.

There was one Japanese lady, married to an Englishman, who came quite often to our home in the legation, and I especially recall something my mother said about her.

“She is a lovely little thing, and I like her tremendously, but she has a habit of saying ‘you know’ so much that it gets on one’s nerves! It’s ‘you know’ this, and ‘you know’ that, until one feels like screaming if she says it again!”

So I started watching for the Japanese lady, who was

so pretty, and said 'you know' until Mother was ready to scream. I was behind the Japanese screen one day when she came to call, and so was my sister.

I whispered to my sister:

"Get pencil and paper! Mother says that this lady keeps saying 'you know,' and I want to count how many times she says it. Perhaps there is truth in what Mother says. If there is, someone ought to tell the lady that it annoys my mother."

So Sister got pencil and paper for me, and every time the Japanese lady said 'you know,' I put it down on the paper.

When the lady had gone I counted the marks I had made on the paper, and the lady had said 'you know' exactly fifty-three times!

I watched the foreigners carefully, and it came to me that I liked foreign ways far better than Chinese ways, and I am afraid that the idea remained with me thereafter, even to this day, and perhaps caused me some unhappiness.

Chinese believed it polite to serve guests, using their own chopsticks, with which they were eating, to serve them. Foreigners, I discovered, did not like to eat with utensils which had been in someone else's mouth.

Chinese came to discuss business, and discussed everything else under the sun, because to speak right out would have indicated impolite eagerness. Foreigners came to talk business and talked business without verbal

beating-about-the-bush. While the Chinese custom might have been interesting, I early discovered that foreigners did things faster and more efficiently.

I never ceased to be amused at the excessive politeness of the Japanese, with their eternal bowing and scraping, and their hissing of indrawn breath.

I think, perhaps, that the gossip from the servants' quarters will come closer than anything else to showing the contrast between Chinese and foreign customs.

When we knew we were coming to Japan, we doubled the wages of all our servants. The number one boy, of course, received the highest pay, which gave him eight dollars a month as soon as he arrived in Japan, or somewhat less than four dollars in American money! All our servants were eager to come to Japan for this reason, since in China eight dollars a month was unheard of affluence.

But in China, whenever master had guests, every guest always left money for the servants. It was an old custom which still holds good in most places in China. This money, however much there was of it, was given to the number one boy, who hoarded it carefully, distributing it to the rest of the servants on festival days, or three times a year. The number one boy, of course, got the most, and he was responsible for the proper distribution of these money gifts, and I do not recall that I ever heard a servant appeal from his decision as to the proper amount assigned to each person. One time,

when the day for distribution came around, the *amah* who served my sister and me received about four hundred *taels*, which is roughly about two hundred and fifty American dollars. This had been accumulated between festival days.

Naturally enough, perhaps, with their wages all doubled when we were to leave for Japan, the servants had visions of unheard of riches, and when Father began to receive callers at the legation, and to give dinners, luncheons and balls, our servants had dreams of great money harvests—only to learn that folk outside of China never even thought of leaving money for the servants, and that they received, in Japan, their wages, and no more!

It did not take long for the servants to realize that they had made bad bargains, and a Chinese servant who is displeased is a difficult creature to manage. They all wished to quit at once, and return to China where visitors left tips for the servants, and we had to let the most of them go, and hire others in their places.

It was the servants who were the most outspoken in their dislike of all customs which were not Chinese.

I overheard their bitter discussions of foreigners, and foreign ways, when they were planning to return to China, but before they had openly broken the news to Father and Mother.

The *amah*, "small-foot" *amah*, who had been with us for years, was quite bitter about it all. This was the

same *amab* who, back there on our triumphal journey from Peking to Tungchow, en route to Japan, had wept over her lost trinkets and would not be comforted.

"Just think of it!" she said angrily to the number one boy. "We are to be in this barbarous place for four years! They don't know our customs here, and will never adopt them. Foreigners don't know how to do anything properly! No money gifts for the servants . . . visitors eat everything put before them . . . we work and they don't tip us . . . they talk all the time . . . put on airs . . . don't worship their ancestors . . . don't pray before their ancestral tablets. . . . I'll wager that if master stays here four years he will break his ancestral tablets as soon as he returns to China! He'll never worship at his ancestral tablets again! He will adopt foreign ways, because the foreigners will not adopt Chinese ways, and he must get along with them. . . ."

"Did you ever see master worship his ancestors, or pray before the ancestral tablets, even before he came to Japan?" said the number one boy. "Oh, I know you are right in most things, but you wrong master when you say the foreigners will change him. He was changed, or maybe just different, before he ever came to Japan at all!"

Of course I ran and told Father all about it. Father had no special religion, living mostly by his own equivalent of the Golden Rule, but he never interfered with

the religions of others, and never talked about it. He held that everybody, including himself, had a right to his or her own religious ideas. So when I told Father what the servants were saying, he merely smiled.

"I have no intention of breaking my ancestral tablets," he said, "or desecrating the graves of my ancestors. I shall make the visits prescribed by custom, and will be no more different from other Manchus than I have always been!"

And so, for a few weeks, while calls were being returned, and afterward, when Father had made additional calls which must likewise be returned, a stream of people, all nationalities, passed across my view, watched from behind the Japanese screen, until I had noted the different customs of them all, memorized little mannerisms.

It is noteworthy, perhaps, that the Tom Thumb people of my fairyland garden, under the spreading pine tree before the main entrance to the legation, adopted the customs and habits of the people who came to see Father, as soon as I myself had learned them, and had carried the tale of them to my subjects in Lilliput.

THE CHERRY BLOSSOM GARDEN PARTY

MISS TOKUGAWA, first lady-in-waiting to Her Majesty, the Empress of Japan, was a frequent caller at the Chinese Legation, and I grew to love her very much. She and Mother were very great friends, and I often listened as they talked over the gossip of the Japanese Court, listened until I found myself possessed of the greatest desire to see the court, to see the Emperor and his Empress, and see how these things were done in Japan. To me Miss Tokugawa was a being apart, because she walked with the great ones of the land, and was seldom absent from the side of Her Majesty the Empress.

How wonderful it must be to be a court lady! Miss Tokugawa often talked with me, and she didn't treat me like a child, either. I was twelve, by this time, and was learning Japanese quite rapidly, and Miss Tokugawa took great interest in me. She thought I was older than I really was, probably because I wore the high-heeled Manchu shoes and the Manchu long gown, and this mistake as to my age was the means of furnishing me with one of life's greatest thrills in Japan.

For Their Majesties had a garden party. Father and Mother of course were invited to attend, and on their

card of invitation was the suggestion that the "young lady" also attend! What wild excitement, for the "young lady" could be no one else but myself. That Manchu long gown, and those Manchu shoes of the high heels, had made me seem sixteen instead of twelve, and so I was bidden to Their Majesties' garden party—the Garden Party of the Cherry Blossoms! And what a gorgeous party it was!

"She is too young to go," said Mother when, wild with excitement at the knowledge I had been invited, too, I almost went into hysterics. "She had best stay at home!"

"Tush! Tush!" said my father. "This isn't China! This is Japan, where we can do more as we please. What difference does it make as long as no one is discommoded? They think she is older than she is, so why not let her go? It will be an experience for her."

So Mother, who was always a stickler for the proper "form" was brought around to Father's way of thinking, and I was informed that I could attend that garden party!

The day for it was long in coming, because I was so eager and so curious, but it came at last, as even important days have a way of doing, and, dressed in our most resplendent robes and gowns, we sallied forth from the legation for our journey to the Imperial Palace. Down those narrow little streets again, with the cigar-box

houses on either side, and with people all dressed in holiday attire to watch us pass.

The crowd grew thicker and thicker as we approached our destination, and I was as proud as though all this grand turnout had been in my sole honor. A child of twelve to see the Emperor and Empress of Japan!

As we drew nearer, coming closer to the great gate which led into the great park-like place where the garden party was to be held, there were cordons of soldiers on either side the street to keep the crowds back. The soldiers were dressed in their gaudiest uniforms, and all carried swords. How martial they looked, yet how somehow squat and funny, some of them wearing spectacles, which seemed so odd on soldiers. They all carried swords, as I say, gleaming all silvery in the afternoon sun. A gorgeous day, as though Heaven were smiling benediction upon Their Majesties. As the carriages passed, most being occupied by foreign diplomats from every country, they were recognized by the soldiers, who honored each diplomat with tip-tilted swords snapped up as one in burnished salute—to Father as we passed, but I bowed and smiled as though the salute had been for me. And even now, I wonder if a few of the salutes were *not* for me.

Then we reached the gates, before which were gathered numberless Japanese officials in their very best,

to greet each visitor, who must show his card of invitation. They were very strict about invitations, and folk who did not have them were turned away. We, however, were different. The *chan chan bo zu* were known everywhere and recognized, so they did not ask to see our invitation, which we showed them anyway.

Then, when we had been passed through the gate, the officials dropped us and allowed us to wander wherever we wished in the park-like place of the garden party. What a gorgeous, wonderful setting! Walls surrounded the place which looked something like the deer reserves at Nara, and everywhere one looked—and held one's breath—were the pink petals of cherry blossoms. Oceans and seas of them, pink as the inside of babies' mouths. Carpets of them underfoot, to be crushed ruthlessly beneath the feet of the guests. The trees in many places met above the cool walks, so that the sun came through with difficulty, dappling the walks with sunlight and shadow. There seemed to me to be no odor to the cherry blossoms, which satisfied the senses in their riotous, pink gorgeousness of color. Winding walks without end, cherry blossoms wherever one looked.

Little hills with cherry trees thrusting pink-flowered bodies upward, greeting the sun with rosy smiles. Here and there were pine trees, standing alone among the cherry trees like sentinels. It was two o'clock in the afternoon, with two whole hours to wait before Their Majesties would arrive. Diplomats of every country,

business men of Japan, and tourists—tourists who made remarks about everything as though they believed every one deaf, dumb and blind, ignorant of English, or did not really care what impressions they made. Disparaging remarks were spoken loudly and freely, with overbearing superiority. I often wondered, in the years that followed, why tourists were so careless of the surely known fact that their countries would be judged by their behavior, as though they had been duly appointed representatives.

Two hours which passed swiftly, because there was much to see, though I was tremendously disappointed in the Imperial Palace which lacked the splendor of the Palaces in our own Forbidden City, which I was later to know, but about which I had only heard stories so far, stories naturally embellished with my own childish imagery. But the Japanese Imperial Palace was disappointing. Everything at that garden party, however, was nicely done. Whatever the Japanese do, generally speaking, is done nicely, and visitors and guests were treated with lavish cordiality, with much bowing and bending, and indrawing of hissing breath.

The Palace was as huge almost as the Palace at Kyoto, where coronations are held, but it lacked gaudy coloring, though fashioned much after the Chinese style of architecture.

Then, near four o'clock, when I at least had begun to grow impatient, a stir went through the vast assemblage

which now almost filled the place of the garden party.

The master of ceremonies, Count Tokugawa, father of the court lady already referred to, stood inside the gate and cried in Japanese:

"Their Majesties are coming!"

Instantly began the scramble for place to witness the coming of the two great ones of Japan. The walk along which they were to pass was lined with diplomats, behind whom were banked solid, unable-to-breathe business men and tourists; and everybody doffed their hats except the tourists.

And through the gates came Their Majesties, whom I thus saw for the first time. I wasn't a diplomat, but I had resolved to see everything, and was proudly desirous of being seen myself, by Their Majesties. Why have a brilliant new Manchu long gown, if Their Majesties were not to see it? So, while the row on either side of the walk went by right of station to the diplomats, I took a row to myself, in *front* of the diplomats, as my very own, where I would be close enough to see what was going on—and it just happened that I stood squarely in front of Mr. d'Anethan, Minister of the Belgians, who was such a little man that, with my high-heeled shoes, I towered above him. Since even now I buy my clothing in the children's department, you will understand that d'Anethan was not impressive as to size.

"You have no right to be here!" snapped d'Anethan to me. "I can't see a thing!"

But I refused to be cheated of my thrills by even a Minister of the Belgians, and stood my ground.

"What right has a child to attend a garden party like this, anyway? Make room for me so that I can see! Yü Keng does very wrong to bring a mere child to such a fête as this!"

Then I am afraid I was somewhat insolent.

"If I am such a child," I said to d'Anethan, "why is it that you are even less than I, and unable to see over my head what transpires! Here, I hold out my hand, that you may stand upon it and see!"

I must apologize for the impudence of that girl of twelve, but you must remember she was determined not only to see, but to be seen, and so she was impudent to a Minister of the Belgians, and held her ground, forgetting d'Anethan as the Imperial Party approached.

As Their Majesties came along, everybody bowed, the tourists made loud remarks, and I feasted my eyes on the Glory of Empire, which didn't impress me as much as it should have. For Their Majesties were dressed in "foreign" clothes, and their tailors must have known little about foreign clothes. His Majesty's suit was ill-fitting, and I was in mortal fear that it was so loose it might drop off him in the midst of the ceremony. I noted many of the other important officials with his party, too, and young as I was I noted many defects in their dress. There were Counts in full evening dress with swallow-tails. A Prince wore a Tuxedo, and a tall

silk hat which was so big it came down over his ears, and the ties worn matched all the colors of the rainbow. Imitative Japan was adopting Western modes of dress, and passing through the throes of sartorial evolution with a vengeance. The clothing was rich, but never in all my travels, before or since, have I seen such poor fits.

The women wore dresses of rich brocade, cut in the "foreign" fashion, with tiny little ludicrous hats perched in solitary grandeur in the midst of imposing coiffures.

Their Majesties passed us, bowing and smiling, and entered a tent-like building which had only a vast roof with no walls, where they were to receive, and shake hands with, their guests, or such of them as they cared to thus honor—and I made up my mind then and there that I would shake hands with Their Majesties!

As each distinguished diplomat approached Their Majesties, he was announced by Count Tokugawa, shook hands with the Emperor and the Empress, and passed on through to the adjoining building where food was to be served.

"Lord Yü Keng! Lady Yü Keng! Miss Yü Keng!"

There it was at last, and before I realized what was happening, I was shaking hands with the Empress and the Emperor, and finding myself without a word to say. It was rather embarrassing, but my chest lifted with pride when Miss Tokugawa, the court lady friend of Mother and me, who stood beside the Empress, bowing and smiling, told Their Majesties about me, and that I

was studying Japanese, and both Their Majesties said that was very nice, and a distinct compliment to Japan!

So I had been received at the Japanese court, as becomes the sixteen year old daughter of a minister, and though I was but twelve in years, never again, in my own mind at least, would I be under sixteen!

Then we passed on into the adjoining building, also without walls, where a huge table groaned under its load of food—coffee, tea, cold meats, other articles too numerous to mention, and which I scarcely noticed anyhow, having just shaken hands with Their Majesties!—and behind which were lined up a veritable army of Japanese, whose duty it was to serve the guests.

Even the officials, so democratic was this informal gathering, helped serve the guests with food. They gave me this, and I ate it; they gave me that and I ate it. But what it was in either case I could not have told had my life depended upon it.

I had shaken hands with the Emperor and Empress of a mighty nation!

Father and Mother were there, also!

FATHER ENTERTAINS

CHINESE ministers in Japan, before my father's time, had never been popular, had been regarded with distrust as incomprehensible aliens. The principal reason for this was rather simple.

When ministers came to Japan, they were first entertained by the resident Japanese official, then in turn by each of the foreign ministers at Tokyo. Official calls were made and returned, and the formality of joining the colony ended with the joining minister returning all the dinners given him by ministers already in Tokyo.

But the Chinese ministers hitherto had accepted dinners given by foreign ministers, and had not bothered to return them, save when they felt inclined. They adopted the attitude that the "foreigners" did not really care anything about them, and that therefore there was no real reason why they should return foreign courtesy dinners.

But the laws governing social usage among foreign legations are as immutable, almost, as the laws of the Medes and Persians, and when the Chinese ministers, through ignorance, or downright stinginess, failed to return dinners, they were soon dropped from the lega-

tion social circle, and became social outcasts—and the outcast is seldom trusted. It is really surprising how the fate of empires and republics may so easily depend upon the everyday courtesies of their chosen representatives.

Father, however, was different. He made all his calls with careful exactness, and never failed to give to any official the courtesy due him; and in Japan, where politeness is ingrained in the lowest, courtesy was of prime importance. Because Father adhered so strictly to the rules, however much he may have disliked them, he did more to revive the prestige of China than any minister before him had ever done.

Incidentally, in passing, Father was decorated by Japan with the Order of the Rising Sun for his work in Japan.

It was Father's turn to entertain, and I was tremendously excited. Next to shaking hands with Their Majesties, I was quite sure that nothing as thrilling as a big dinner to all the diplomats would ever be my experience. For a time I had high hopes of being among those present, for to myself, after that wonderful garden party, I would never again be twelve years old.

But to Mother and Father, alas! I still was twelve years old, and thus automatically barred from the festivities. But they overlooked the utility of the Japanese screen in the hallway, whence a diminutive child of twelve could see in all directions—down the hallway to the door giving onto the garden and my own little

kingdom of Lilliput, to the doors of the two cloakrooms just inside the outer door, facing each other across the hall, into the drawing room where Father and Mother waited to receive their guests, into the dining room where they ate, and straight ahead into the huge ball-room to which they would repair after the lavish dinner.

For hours and hours I scarcely breathed behind the screen, fearing that I be heard and forthwith banished, while my eyes must have been huge with excitement as I watched the grand ladies and grand men enter from the driveway outside, to separate in the hallway and repair to the cloakrooms.

The men were always dressed to the minute, in black clothes. Most wore riding boots and spurs, and all wore their decorations, and some had many of these. The women would enter the cloakroom and emerge a few minutes later—to make me almost gasp! Glorious evening gowns, gorgeous coiffures topped with glistening precious stones from which sprouted snowy white egret feathers. Diamond tiaras, as though some of the dowagers had been empresses or court ladies at a court of splendor. All the women had long rustling trains which they caught up in their hands as they swept majestically down the hallway, past where I was hidden, and to the door of the drawing room, to greet Father and Mother.

And Mother! Well, Mother was, and always will be,

to me the most beautiful woman in all this world, despite the fact that she was a trifle stout, which only added to her wonderful dignity.

I wondered, as the ladies passed me in solemn, wondrous parade, how it would feel to dress as they dressed, to wear long trains which one caught up in one's hand, to wear hair piled high on one's head, topped with diamonds and egret feathers. How I would have gloried in it, and my imagination was such that I could easily see myself wearing every one of the gorgeous dresses, and parading my charms, gracefully and in a regal manner, before my people in Lilliput. But I was only twelve. Some day, perhaps. . . .

In the ladies' cloakroom we had a Japanese *amah* to attend the needs of the ladies, while a Japanese butler looked after the wants of the men in the cloakroom opposite. We had Japanese for these duties because our Chinese servants knew no Japanese and had not cared to learn.

How stiff and formal it all was, yet how I gloried in it. How easy it was for me to see myself aping the grand manner of the dowagers, and entering some rich drawing room on the arm of a great gallant—say someone like Major Hijikata, who had been educated in Germany, wore a waxed moustache which he was always twirling, and was always clicking his heels and bowing deeply to the ladies, both hands on his abdomen, which was so tightly clothed he seemed to be wearing corsets.

Mother used to take much time in arranging for these dinners, for where great people gather the forms must be strictly followed. The Japanese, of course, were always the guests of honor, because we were in their country, after which preference was given to other guests in the order of their dates of assignment to Tokyo, the longest resident having the honor.

Just outside the door of the drawing room was a little table which was very important. On this table was a chart of the table in the dining room, showing exactly where each guest was to sit. This chart was shown to each gentleman, who made sure that he knew exactly where he was to sit—and since each of them knew exactly his own importance, and to what his rank entitled him, these charts had to be exactly correct. In addition to the charts there were little slips of paper for each gentleman, on which were printed the words:

“Please offer your arm to . . .”

Then followed the name of the lady the particular gentleman, whose name, engraved, appeared on the paper, was to take in to dinner. She had to be the lady who sat next to that particular gentleman, so that there would be no undignified running about the table to find proper places. It required almost a tactician to arrange a formal dinner of this kind.

The guests began to gather, to meet my regal mother and my dignified father—who no visitor would have thought could possibly be the parents of an inquisitive

child of twelve who hid behind Japanese screens and rather shamelessly peered out upon the guests.

The men bowed very low, the Japanese with hands on abdomens, and with the polite hissing of indrawn breath—"that my humble breath may not blow upon you." Stiff and formal, but gorgeous.

The setting, too, was gorgeous. That drawing room at the Chinese Legation was a beautiful place. The windows were curtained in blue and gold brocades; a davenport was decorated in the same color scheme; a French chandelier peered down from the ceiling, glittering with glass pendants, catching up the reflections from the jewels in the coiffures of the ladies. There were long tables against the wall opposite the door from the hallway. These tables were covered with Japanese things of exquisite artistry, vases, bronzes, *et cetera*. There was a bay window with a semicircular window seat deep with soft cushions, the cushions all of blue and gold brocade, following out the theme of the hangings. Mother had spent much time and thought on these things, and even her blasé guests became enthusiastic in our drawing room—which was never *my* drawing room, unless it happened to be empty and Father and Mother were engaged elsewhere, when I would sneak in, pretend to be a great lady, stride back and forth on the arm of an entirely invisible gallant, murmur polite phrases to my host and hostess—in short, have a reception of my own, myself taking the part of all the guests,

the host and hostess, and even the twelve year old hiding behind the Japanese screen in the hallway!

The polite sayings having all been said, the gentlemen, who had memorized their slips of paper, offered their arms to the ladies designated, and entered the dining room, across the hall, and once again I watched the passing parade of grandeur. Beautiful ladies, gorgeous gallants with arms bent to receive fragile hands. Across the hallway, into the dining room, where I could see everything, because the Japanese screen might just as well have been placed in the beginning for my particular use of it. Then the seating, the Japanese first, and so on.

Under the bright lights which made brilliant the scene, I could see the real splendor of the dinner when all the guests were seated. Father at the head of the table, Mother at the other end—and here, because of many such dinners viewed from behind the screen, there passes in review before my memory a little army of great men, out of which I select a name or two in passing.

Count Okuma, Japanese Minister of Foreign Affairs, wearing many decorations across his breast; the minister from France, wearing the red button of the Legion of Honor; M. d'Anethan of the Belgians, diminutive but exceedingly important. Major Hijikata, who was my first love. However, as I look back at the Major, I wonder why I loved him, and am inclined to believe that it was his waxed moustache that stole my heart, or per-

haps it was his heel clicking, his tight waisted uniform, or—whatever it was, I doubt very much if it was the Major himself who won the love of the little Manchu girl of twelve.

There were many servants here to help the guests, and food appeared miraculously from behind a screen which masked the little door leading into the pantry where the genii prepared viands fit for even these glorious folk. It was a long drawn out meal, eaten in bursts of sparkling conversation, subdued laughter politely modulated because no gentleman or lady would laugh out loudly at such a formal gathering.

I must say here that the floors of all these rooms were parquet. I have neglected too the Chinese rugs on the floor of the drawing room, but that is unimportant, because the rugs were only fit for the great ones to stand upon and for the ladies to drag their trains across.

The dining room furniture was of blackwood, with everything to match, and to leave the drawing room of the blue and gold brocades to enter the dining room was as much like leaving one world to enter a different one as it would have been to quit the legation for a visit with my own puppets in Lilliput.

The dishes were Japanese, each however, marked with our family crest. I wonder I did not tire as I waited for the people to make an end of eating; but I did not, because I was so excited, and besides I was living the life of every guest present, and even of Father and Mother.

But the dinner was ended at long last, and the parade began again, a long file of ladies and gallants passing my hiding place, wheeling in the hall like soldiers marching and turning, to move majestically down the hallway to the great ballroom, which always seemed to me so bare.

I could see but little of what transpired there, for my screen could not be moved without attracting attention, but I knew the ballroom by heart, a great bare place with a polished floor. There were four great chandeliers in this room at the end of the hallway, one in each corner—and the fashion parade began when the musicians (Japanese playing foreign music) started playing. There were seats along the wall for the ladies. A raised platform at one end was for the musicians, who played a piano, a violin, a cello, a cornet and a flute.

The dances they danced! How grave and courteous the bowings and bendings, the hissing of the Japanese, the bird-like twittering of the women, the scraping of shoes over polished floors, the splendid uniforms.

They danced dances almost forgotten today: the slow waltz, the polka, lancers, barn dances, the schottische, while the dance began with the inevitable grand march. Stately ladies with long trains! How they saved them from utter ruin is still a mystery!

Long slow dances, which would seem almost funny today, would come to an end at last. Then there was the little room just off the musicians' platform, where

punch was served to the thirsty, and where gallants could take their partners in triumph after some particularly exhausting dance.

Straight ahead of me, on the opposite wall of the ballroom, I could see a Chinese painting, the only one visible; but I knew that the walls were covered with other paintings like it, and that the ballroom, despite the bareness of the floor, was really a gorgeous, solemn place, fit for a dwelling place of a mighty, gaudy court. Years later I went back to that legation, and it seemed small and unimposing, perhaps because I had outgrown it.

But down that hall, as through a strange sort of telescope, I watched the dancers pass the door, swaying and bending gracefully, moving across the face of that Chinese painting, until the music dulled in my ears, the twittering of the women sounded like the twittering of waking birds, the scraping of feet across the polished floor became a soothing monotone, and I wakened in my own room under the shaking hand of Hung Fang—hateful Hung Fang!

"Get up, sleepyhead! Your breakfast is cooling, and your tutor is getting impatient!"

CHINA'S GREAT STATESMAN

WE had been about two years in Japan when Father received the letter which informed him that China's greatest statesman would be in Yokohama shortly, on the last leg of his memorable journey around the world. I myself had met this great man, some years before, but to me he had just been another official whom I had met through my father.

When Father received the letter telling him that the great statesman would arrive soon in Yokohama aboard the *City of Peking*, he was quite excited about it, and made rather lavish preparations to meet the guest and entertain him in Yokohama. Many foreign officials were asked by Father to make the journey from Tokyo to Yokohama to meet this statesman.

I managed to get an invitation myself, probably because Father wished to have me, partly because I believed I would thus for a few days be freed of the necessity of listening to the droning voice of my tutor, and mostly because I was intensely curious about this great Chinese who was just completing a journey around the world.

Many strange stories were told about this man, and

I had heard many of them myself, mostly third, fourth and even fifth hand, in the gossip of the kitchen and the drawing room.

This man was very old, and when he had decided that it would be a good thing for him to make a journey around the world in the interests of China, and he had managed to secure the approval of the Empress Dowager of his good will journey, he made very careful arrangements about his journey.

He had, according to the stories, a great horror of dying in a foreign country, for he was one of China's true patriots, and trembled when he even thought of dying abroad, and perhaps being buried on other soil than China's. So, while he knew the journey had to be made, he made such preparations as he could manage. He was very eccentric, and not the least of his eccentricities was the fact that on his long journey he carried with him a coffin of Chinese manufacture, in which he expressed the wish that he sleep in case of death, so that, even though he might possibly be buried on foreign soil—though he took all possible precautions against that contingency, too—he would rest in a Chinese coffin.

This coffin probably had something to do with his fame. But there was no denying his greatness, nor his eccentricity.

So I asked my father about him.

"Has he higher rank than you, Father?" I asked.

"Oh, yes," said Father, "every time the Empress

Dowager wishes someone to undertake a really important mission, she intrusts it to him. He has been a viceroy, and is now on the Grand Council, ranking almost equal with Yung Lu, Her Majesty's favorite."

"What is his rank?"

"He is a Marquis."

"But a Marquis is not as high as a Lord, and you are a Lord."

"My rank is hereditary, and I do not use it to advance myself. I am a Manchu. He is a Chinese, and his title was bestowed upon him."

"Then the title really has nothing to do with an official's importance?"

"It is all very complicated," explained Father patiently. "While my title is higher than his, his rank exceeds mine, his *official* rank. And Her Majesty has showered him with honors. . . ."

"What honors?"

"Well, I have been honored by permission to wear the 'single-eyed' peacock feather. He is allowed to wear the 'double-eyed' feather, which is very rare. He has been honored by the bestowal of the 'yellow jacket,' which I never had. And he is allowed to ride horseback within the Forbidden City. He has been granted all the favors within the power of Her Majesty to give."

"But is he as capable as you are?"

"Of course he is, you silly child! He really deserves

all his honors, for he is very efficient. Why are you so interested?"

"I don't like to think of any official being more honored than you!"

My father laughed at this.

"We are very great friends," he said. "I honor and respect him. He is really great, and has done many wonderful things for China. This journey he is just completing will make many friends for China. I have done things for China, but not as directly as he has. I am more like a foreigner, and probably not so patriotic as is the great man who is coming."

Well, the steamer was due within a couple of days, and we went to Yokohama to await the arrival of the great statesman. Father engaged for him the finest suite of rooms in, I believe, the Hotel Metropole. He would be but a short time in Yokohama, but he would wish to rest and smoke his water pipe before partaking of the luncheon which was being arranged for him, a luncheon which was to be attended by many Japanese and other diplomats. What gorgeous rooms for a man who would use them but a few hours! But no extravagance was really extravagance to do the great man honor.

I do not know exactly what sort of a man I expected to see, but when we went to meet the Chinese statesman whose reputation even now was international—and this was before he signed the treaties for China after the

Boxer Uprising—I turned to my father and expressed my disappointment.

“Why, he is just an ordinary old man.”

But Father reproved me, and I imagine I was rather forward in thus discussing one who was so great and famous.

The statesman was dressed in a huge Chinese padded gown, padded boots, and looked like a great ungainly bundle of a man. He had a long grey beard which hung down over his chest, and though he was a regal, imposing figure, I could not help noting that his clothing was unkempt. Father told me that he had worn his Chinese clothing during all his long journey. He was not a man to doff the conspicuous dress of his native land, even in America.

Father met him, and my impression of their conversation is rather vague, though I do recall quite plainly that the statesman prefaced every remark to Father with a rasping clearing of the throat. A huge man, mostly because he was so padded, who might have seemed ridiculous, had one not known of the great things he had done.

No man before him, during the *régime* of Her Majesty Tzu Hsi, had been so showered with honors, nor had suffered so much criticism when things went wrong. Her Majesty depended upon him to the uttermost, and even his prophecies were regarded almost as law, but when his prophecies did not turn out well, Her Majesty would fly into a rage about him, deprive him of his rank

and honors—then give them all back, with additional honors, when she needed him again.

He was almost the first Chinese official I had seen since we had left China ourselves, and he seemed dreadfully uncouth, because I had seen so much of Western propriety at the legations in Tokyo. Some of the things he did were rather nauseating. He knew it, too, but he took the attitude that his greatness entitled him to do much as he liked—which was quite all right in China, where concessions were made to great men. He smoked his water pipe in the fine suite of rooms at the Metro-pole, and dumped burning ashes on the floor and carpet. He spat whenever and wherever the necessity was upon him, and there were other things.

But . . .

He was a great man, and could do no wrong. Please remember that I am discussing memories of my childhood, and that this estimation of the great man is the estimation of a rather critical child.

The reception to the statesman was truly wonderful, and he took the honors as a matter of course, just as he had accepted honors everywhere he had been on his journey around the world.

He had many servants, and usually they stood behind his chair at meals, and followed him wherever he went, always striving to anticipate his wishes, serving him with slavish devotion. If he turned at the table to express a wish, he had no sooner spoken than . . .

"*Jur!* (Yes)," said all his servants in unison, as with one voice. Simultaneously, all his servants leaped to obey, no matter if he had but asked for the saltcellar. Surely no man was ever waited on hand and foot as devotedly as was this great statesman. But Father knew it would not look well for all his uncouth servants to enter the dining room of the Metropole, because the dining room had its full quota of Japanese waiters and "boys," and so he instructed the statesman's servants to remain in the suite until they were called for.

Which they did, with grave consequences, as we were soon to learn. They came out when sent for, and the whole procession of us—Japanese, officials, consuls from various countries, all sorts of people gathered to do honor to the great man—escorted him back to the boat, where we bade "the very ordinary old man" good-by.

We returned to the hotel, where we ourselves had spent a week because the steamer had been late, and the management presented a bill for something like eight hundred dollars for that suite of rooms which the great man had used but a few hours. It was preposterous, and Father said so, whereupon the furious management took us to the rooms to see.

The servants had made good use of their time.

They did not understand running water faucets, and had broken the faucet off to get water, and the grand suite of rooms had been flooded before the hotel "attachés" had discovered it. The servants had smoked

their master's water pipe and had spilled burning ash on the rich carpets, burning holes in them in a dozen places. They had broken the washbowls, scarred the fine furniture, and in general had made a wreck of the suite, the finest suite, in the Metropole.

So Father paid the bill. Naturally no word of this ever reached the great man, nor was Father ever reimbursed, for it was a Chinese custom for one official to entertain a great visitor, to deny him nothing, and to make no complaint, nor to seek to secure redress of any kind for money wasted as this eight hundred dollars had been wasted.

Some time later, however, Father told Wu Ting Fang, one time Minister to Washington, about this incident, and Wu Ting Fang smiled.

"His servants did the same thing in a big hotel in New York," he said. "I don't know who paid the damages there. Are you going to try and secure the return of the damages paid by you?"

Father smiled.

Wu Ting Fang smiled.

They spoke together, reading each other's thought.

"What is the use? He is Li Hung Chang!"

Years later, when Father's things came to me, I found an entry in the stub of an old check book, which read:

"To entertaining Li Hung Chang at Yokohama, eight hundred dollars."

CHINA "COÖPERATION"

FATHER's main mission in Japan was to restore good relations between China and Japan after the China-Japan war, and this chapter will show something of Chinese coöperation in Father's gigantic task. It was no easy thing, with all the natural hatred of the Japanese for the *chan chan bo zu*, for any one man to overcome the racial prejudice, even with all the coöperation in the world. But with no coöperation at all, and even open opposition, the task was well nigh impossible.

Father, of course, realized that Chinese customs would not do in Japan, because the Japanese did not understand them. So as far as possible, Father adopted Japanese ways, just as he always adopted the ways of the countries in which he served, thus, to his way of thinking, paying those countries the highest compliment within his power.

We had been in Japan some time before Father discovered that his own first secretary was an enemy, and a bad enemy because he worked in secret. At this time Sun Yat-sen was a fugitive from justice with a price on his head, and news was had of him from every corner of the globe, while every Chinese subject residing in a

foreign country carried a picture of Sun Yat-sen in his pocket, and scrutinized the faces of passers-by, seeking Sun Yat-sen in the hope of causing his arrest and securing the rewards offered.

Her Majesty Tzu Hsi was very bitter against Sun Yat-sen and his preaching, and it would have gone hard with him had he been returned to China during the life of Her Majesty.

But, in the midst of a busy exciting day, Father received a command from Peking:

"Sun Yat-sen in Japan. Arrest him at once!"

Father knew immediately, of course, that the command did not come from the throne, so he left the message on his desk for a day or two while he tried to decide what was to be done about it. At the end of two days he began to get some inkling as to the reason for the message, and to realize something of the forces which were working in his own legation to undermine all his work in Japan.

"What are you going to do about Sun Yat-sen?" Father's first secretary demanded.

"What can I do?" replied Father. "I do not know where he is, do not even know that he is in Japan, nor could I arrest him on Japanese soil, even if he stood in plain sight in the street before the legation."

"Then you should go to the Japanese officials and demand his arrest!"

"Produce Sun Yat-sen, or bring me proof that he is

in Japan, and where he is hiding, and I will take the necessary steps; but on a mere rumor I can do nothing."

"But here is a command to arrest Sun Yat-sen!"

"It does not come from the throne, and I will be on the safe side to refuse to obey any orders connected with Sun Yat-sen save those which come from the throne."

The first secretary was insistent, but Father stood his ground. All the time he wondered why the message had been sent to him, from whom it had come, and what had inspired it.

Then he received a letter from Prince Kung, advisor to the Chinese throne, brother of the later Emperor Hsien Feng, enclosing a letter from Father's own secretary which read as follows, as nearly as I recall:

"Yü Keng should be denounced to the throne. Here in Japan he has cast aside all the old Chinese customs, adopting Japanese ways. He is a traitor. He does not maintain his dignity as a Chinese high official, nor does he maintain the dignity of China abroad. He is a traitor because he treats the Japanese as equals, rather than as beneath his notice. Moreover, I have been informed that Sun Yat-sen is in Japan, that Yü Keng knows it, is a member of his party, in sympathy with everything he does, and is helping him to remain in hiding!"

As any student of history knows, if this statement could have been proved, Father would most assuredly have been recalled to be decapitated, for Her Majesty hated Sun Yat-sen as she never hated another living per-

son. The fact that foreign countries gave Sun Yat-sen sanctuary had much to do with her hatred of foreign countries, and her obsession that China should rid herself of all foreigners—which she tried to do when Her Majesty ordered Prince Tuan to fire upon the legations in Peking, ushering in the Boxer Uprising.

This letter from our own first secretary had caused some excitement in Chinese official circles in Peking, but Prince Kung's friendship for Father nullified its effect, and even the Emperor and Her Majesty read the memorial which the letter inspired without comment, filing it thereafter, an act which was the same as disregarding it entirely.

Father said nothing to his secretary about it, save to ask him to prove his statements, which he could not do, naturally, since, as far as we knew, Sun Yat-sen was not in Japan at the time. The letter, however, did one thing for Father. It proved that he had enemies serving under him, accepting salary paid by him, and that these enemies would cause his downfall if they could. When anyone spoke to Father about it, and suggested that he discharge the secretary, he invariably answered:

"I am here to do my duty. I shall do it as I think proper. If Their Majesties are not satisfied let them recall me and send someone else here in my place. If I discharge the secretary, other enemies will say that his charges were true."

Father made enemies of his own countrymen in

Japan, outside the legation, too, and for the reason that he believed in justice. If a man deserved credit, Father made sure that he received the credit due him; if he deserved punishment Father saw that he was punished.

Complaints reached Father to the effect that a Chinese in Kobe was smuggling valuable things from China into Japan, and selling them from a shop on Motomachi. The complaints came from the Japanese, who brought the matter to the legation out of courtesy, though they could as well have dealt with it themselves. Father immediately sent the first secretary to investigate the matter, and received confirmation, overwhelming proof, that the complaints were based on a solid foundation of culpability.

But to satisfy both the Japanese and the Chinese nationals, he sent a second secretary, accompanied by Japanese officials, to check up on the investigation. The result was such that the Chinese against whom the complaint had been made was discovered to be guilty of smuggling, and Father arranged for his deportation, and closed his shop.

Our first secretary, though he had made the initial investigation which had disclosed the guilt of the Kobe smuggler, wrote to the Board of Censors in Peking, asking that a memorial be sent to the throne, denouncing Father for taking sides with the Japanese against his own countrymen! Right or wrong, the letter alleged, the Chinese residents in Japan should have the backing of

the Chinese minister! This memorial did go to the throne, and like many another which had gone before it, was filed and, ostensibly, forgotten.

Years later the Empress Dowager spoke to my mother, in my presence, about the steady stream of memorials which came to the throne denouncing Father, and dismissed them with the following words:

"I never believed them. Yü Keng was recommended by Yung Lu, and is as faithful as Yung Lu."

But when the story got abroad among the Chinese about the deportation of the smuggler, the Chinese nationals burned with indignation. Some came to Father to complain, and the burden of their complaint, as relayed by the first secretary who saw the Chinese in Father's stead, may be summed up as follows:

"It is the duty of the Chinese minister in Japan to uphold the Chinese nationals, no matter what they do! If they do wrong he should argue the case with the Japanese officials, and draw it out so far that the issue becomes so cloudy no one remembers the original reason for the complaint. At the very least he should close his eyes to any misdeeds of his countrymen! Why? What harm is there in taking advantage of foreigners? Hitherto the Chinese ministers have stood firmly behind their nationals—who have thus been enabled to do pretty much as they wished!"

Naturally Father had no patience with this idea, any more than he had with the first secretary, who carried

a picture of Sun Yat-sen in his pocket and who had dreams of causing Sun's arrest for the reward offered.

These are only a few of the things which caused trouble for Father, and an almost endless stream of denunciations against him sent to the throne.

Then came the message to the effect that a commission was being sent from China to study finance. This commission was composed of Li Mu Chai, three secretaries, two interpreters, two personal servants of Li, a barber, a cook, and one servant each for the secretaries.

Li's first secretary is well remembered. His name was Wong Ta Chih, and he will be treated at length a bit further on. Father heard that the delegation was coming, and sent his first secretary to Yokohama to meet Li Mu Chai. He was too busy to go himself, nor was it his place to go. Our secretary brought the delegation to Tokyo, to the legation, and Li had scarcely entered when he spoke to Father about his, Father's, failure to meet Li at Yokohama, ending with the brusque demand:

"Show us to our quarters at once!"

"I have no quarters for you," said Father. "My own household requires all the room I have."

"But you knew I was coming?"

"That has nothing to do with it! You receive money to cover your expenditures, the same as I do. You will have to go to a hotel. I cannot make room for you."

"Move out some of your secretaries!"

"I am sorry, I have no room for you!"

The first secretary to Li Mu Chai was an interested listener to this exchange. Father had made an enemy of the delegation, simply because he did not feel called upon to have thirteen men quartered upon him, fed from his kitchens on food paid for out of Father's own income, especially when Li Mu Chai came to Japan plentifully supplied with money—which he very apparently intended to save for himself, at Father's expense.

So the secretary of Li Mu Chai and the secretary of Father got together in a committee of two, to discuss Yü Keng, and the commission to Japan to study Japanese finance became instead a commission to spy upon Father, though I must say here that Li Mu Chai himself, when Father had once explained matters to him, understood sufficiently to cause but little trouble himself.

"He could very easily make room for us," said Wong Ta Chih to our first secretary, "but then perhaps he would not have room to entertain his Japanese friends, and that of course would not do at all! So he refuses us hospitality in order to toady to the Japanese!"

Wong Ta Chih was the cause of many memorials to the throne. Aided by our own secretary, who of course knew all about our affairs, Wong managed to discover how much salary Father received, how much he spent on entertainment, all the little details of our life in

Japan—not one of which was approved by Wong Ta Chih!

Inspired by Wong Ta Chih, Li Mu Chai decided to pay courtesy visits to Japanese high officials, independent of Father, though Father heard of this in time and dissuaded Li Mu Chai. He went with Li then to make the necessary official calls, and, through Count Okuma, arranged for an audience for Li Mu Chai with the Emperor—which fact Wong Ta Chih made the subject of another memorial to the throne of China, referring to this audience as proof of Father's undue friendship with the Japanese! He had to be friendly with them, said Wong, else Count Okuma would not have arranged for an audience with the Emperor at Father's wish!

I am very much afraid that the commission to study finance learned little about finance, and much about Father's doings in Japan. At this period in Father's career, it is quite probable that but for the friendship of Prince Kung and Yung Lu, Father would have been recalled long before the end of his term, and perhaps have been punished severely for "treason."

Nothing was too great or small to be reported to the throne.

Li Mu Chai and his secretaries were present at one of Father's formal balls for legation folk and Japanese officials, and Wong Ta Chih saw a French official kiss my mother's hand! This caused another denunciation. Prince Kung was unable to secure the memorial setting

forth this heinous offense, but he was able to see it and learn the details, of which he informed Father by letter:

"Another memorial has come to the throne denouncing you as a traitor, and making the following allegations of fact: You are harboring Sun Yat-sen; you are preparing to sell China to the Japanese; you have forsaken Chinese ways, and allow other men to take luncheon and dinner at your home, with your wife; you allow other men to hold her hand and put their lips on it; you have not the proper respect for your own rank! These are the words of the memorial, not my own expressions. I believe in you. So does Her Majesty. We know that if you do the things enumerated in this memorial, there must be an excellent reason for so doing!"

This charge that Father had not sufficient respect for his rank was an outgrowth of his visit to Count Okuma to arrange for an audience with the Emperor for Li Mu Chai. He knew Japanese customs, and removed his cap—which carried the peacock feather and red coral button of his rank—in the presence of the Count. He held the cap on his knees, until Count Okuma asked him to look at some papers which required the use of both his hands, whereupon he placed his cap on the floor beside his chair—while Li Mu Chai and Wong Ta Chih sat stiffly, disapprovingly, kept their caps on, and noted Father's treasonable act of placing this emblem of the first official rank on the floor in the office of a foreigner!

When these matters came to Father's attention later, through Prince Kung's letter, Mother suggested that he make some written defense, or explanation, of his acts, to which he replied:

"I do what I think right. Her Majesty may always recall me if I do not please her."

Later, some years later, at the Chinese court, Mother and I were with Her Majesty Tzu Hsi when Miss Carl, who painted Her Majesty's portrait, attempted to kiss Her Majesty's hand. Her Majesty of course did not understand it, and would permit none to touch her in any case.

"But it is a sign of respect, Your Majesty," I said.

Her Majesty smiled and turned to my mother.

"That reminds me of one of the memorials which came to the throne denouncing Yü Keng, because he allowed men to take your hand and put their lips on it!"

"In Europe to kiss the hand of a lady is a sign of the highest respect," I said again.

"What a strange way to show respect," said Her Majesty. "I do not think it nice at all. It seems to me to indicate quite the opposite of respect."

Which shows the conservative attitude of Her Majesty—and that though she filed all those denunciatory memorials, she never forgot a one of them.

Father however, in spite of Li Mu Chai, Wong Ta Chih, and his own vindictive first secretary, went calmly on his way, doing the best he knew, as always. No mo-

tive can be assigned for the disloyalty of our own first secretary, save that he wished to collect the reward offered for Sun Yat-sen, wished to humble Father because such an act would make him either famous or infamous, and secure promotion for himself which he did not care to wait for his own ability to earn him.

"FOREIGN" POLITENESS

FATHER's term of service in Japan was drawing to a close, and he had every right to feel satisfied that he had done the best for China, and that Japan had appreciated his efforts. His relations with the Japanese had been uniformly pleasant, despite the fact that other ministers at Tokyo had warned him of the eternal difficulty of "managing" the Japanese.

The Japanese press was uniformly gracious to Father, and played no small part in his success. Aristocratic Japanese liked and respected him, a respect which was mutual, and the press fell into line.

The mass of the Japanese believed in the press as gospel. The four policemen who had been assigned as our bodyguard had long since been released from this duty, and very rarely now did the hateful *chan chan bo zu* ring in our ears when we went abroad. Father had firmly established himself with the Japanese. His social relations were pleasant, as were his official and his business relations.

"But don't be misled by the apparent friendliness of the Japanese," said the other ministers, in effect, "for now that it is coming time for you to leave they will

drop you socially and officially, because you can no longer be of use to them.”

This was a libel on the Japanese which Father never ceased to resent, because up to the very moment of his departure the fine treatment he received at the hands of the Japanese was unchanged.

Among his friends Father counted some of Japan’s most famous men. There were Count Hijikata, father of the major already referred to; Marquis Nabeshima, Marquis Matzugata, Marquis Ito, Marquis Oyama, Marquis Saionji; Okura *san*, one of the wealthiest business men in Japan, and Hiyashi *san*, first Japanese Minister to China after the China-Japan war—all were Father’s friends, and remained his friends until his death.

And here, it seems to me, it is well to show what adaptability is worth in foreign countries. Father tried to please the Japanese, did not try to impress them with a wholly spurious attitude of personal superiority, did not quarrel with their customs, and made friends with them. Nor was it hypocrisy, for he really liked the Japanese, and valued his Japanese friends most highly.

Here I would like to describe in detail a dinner given by Okura *san* to the diplomats, as illustrating some of the things foreign representatives should not do. Their superior attitudes put many of them down as fools in the minds of the people they are trying to impress, and most assuredly do not make the Easterner pine for Western civilization.

I attended this dinner of Okura *san*, which was served Japanese fashion, where everyone removed shoes and sat on the floor before little tables. Father was placed next the German minister, Herr Kutschmidt, and his conversation was reported to the family later by Father, who was so impressed with this sometimes typical attitude of the Westerner that I have never forgotten it.

Father's Japanese friends were at the dinner, as were most of the foreign diplomats.

Okura *san* was extremely polite to his guests, and maintained the Japanese customs throughout the really wonderful meal. There is one custom which may seem strange to Westerners, but which always seemed to me a really delightful one. When guests gathered by invitation it was the custom of the host to go to each guest, bow to that guest, while the geisha girl filled the guest's tiny cup with wine. The guest was then to take the wine and drink with the host. Okura *san* followed this custom carefully, moving to each guest, going down on his knees to bow, sipping wine with the guest, then moving on to the next.

He bowed before the German minister and sipped wine with him, and the minister acknowledged the courtesy, without a sign that he thought the custom an odd one or the bowing of Okura *san* servile and self-abasing. But when Okura *san* had passed out of hearing, the German minister turned to my father.

“What a silly custom!” he said. “A grown man crawling around on his knees before his guests!”

“It is the custom,” said Father, “and the Japanese like their customs. I personally think this custom a very graceful one, peculiarly apt in the circumstances. I do not feel it proper that his guests should criticize Okura *san* while they are accepting his hospitality!”

“Silly!” snorted the German. “You Orientals are a servile lot.”

To which Father only smiled a little, and bowed.

The German minister went on talking with Father.

“You remember that time you called on me and I spoke to you in pidgin English? Well, I had a reason for it. I did not understand the Chinese, and thought if they understood English at all it would be the simplest kind of English. At a dinner at which your before-the-war predecessor sat across the table from me, I was thoroughly disgusted with him. He was eating away, saying nothing to anyone, and he made peculiar noises with his mouth. I looked at him and spoke one word to him in French: ‘*cochon*,’ which means ‘pig,’ and he smiled at me, bowed deeply, and said ‘yes.’”

“I will explain his attitude to you,” said Father. “First, of course, he did not understand you, since you had not the courage to express your disgust so that he would understand. He perhaps, however, realized your disgust, though he probably never did understand what

caused it, and was entirely too polite to deny you the right to enjoy your disgust to the utmost. His was the acme of politeness. Of the two of you, I do not hesitate to say that the Chinese minister to whom you refer was the gentleman!"

Later on the German minister, who took Father's words calmly, casually, as though he were merely humoring a spoiled child, spoke to Father again.

"These chopsticks are so silly," he said. "You Chinks use them, too, don't you?"

Father answered in the affirmative.

"What is the idea of chopsticks? Why not knives and forks, like civilized people? Why do the Chinese use chopsticks?"

"Well," said Father thoughtfully, "the Chinese people are noted for being thrifty, and the use of chopsticks is just another way of making both ends meet!"

So the German minister went on through the meal, criticizing everything, uncaring who heard him, yet making a bounteous meal from the food of the host whom he criticized. Years later I grew accustomed to this sort of thing in my own house in Peking, where people often came to me with letters of introduction from my friends in England and the United States, accepted my hospitality and spoke disparagingly, often while under my roof, often to my very face, about my food, my servants, my house and my own way of dressing.

Father never cared for tea, and when at the Okura dinner it came time for tea to be served, Father was served with the rest, but he did not touch his cup, and the German minister, who noted everything, spoke about it.

“Why do you not drink your tea?”

“I never drink tea,” said Father, “because I do not like tea.”

“How very odd,” said the minister, “I thought all Chinks liked tea.”

“That,” retorted Father, “seems to be a popular belief, much like the belief that all Germans are fond of beer and cheese! Yet I have met many Chinese who did not like tea, and many Germans who cared nothing for either beer or cheese. I beg your pardon for being so rude as to answer you this way, which is strictly contrary to Chinese usage, but you are so rude yourself that I feel it only right you should know how you offend people!”

Wasted effort! For the German minister regarded Father’s words as just another proof of his own superiority, since he could rise so high above just criticism on the wings of his own vanity as to allow the words, after a popular Western expression, to go in one ear and out the other.

I do not criticize the German minister. I merely point to him as an example. For I later met many another foreigner after him who was *not* German, yet

who seemed to have borrowed whole pages from the book of Kutschmidt.

At this dinner also was a very beautiful Japanese lady, wife of Hiyashi *san*, who was but seventeen years of age.

"Who is she?" demanded the minister.

"She is Mrs. Hiyashi. Isn't she beautiful? She has two delightful children."

"Bah!" said the minister. "You Orientals are just plain beasts! Imagine civilized men marrying mere children!"

"No," said Father quietly, "from all I have heard of the behavior of Germans in maintaining their outlying colonies, Germans prefer *not* to marry young women—and to take them anyway!"

Father, I think, could not well be blamed for resenting the overbearing attitude of the German minister, but . . .

It is my dearest wish that, some day, there shall be better understanding between the races, understanding based upon something more substantial than the assumed superiority of the Westerner, who regards the Oriental as scum, beneath his notice, and is surprised when the Oriental occasionally resents this attitude and refuses to bow down and worship.

That day will come, I am sure, but only after the Westerner grows up, and realizes that not all the world is encompassed by his own back yard.

MY PROUDEST MOMENT

A DAY with me and with my various instructors will serve to show something of what a daughter of a Manchu official of high rank was required to know, and for this reason I should like to take you through one of my own days in Japan. This was near the close of Father's term of service, and we would soon bid good-by to Japan.

At eight o'clock sharp each morning we children repaired to the little house set aside for Miss Brown, who taught us English; and there were always annoying preliminaries in connection with the daily march to the house of Miss Brown, whom I remember with pleasure.

To begin with, there was always Hung Fang, who had no use for children. She had a child of her own, born two months after Mother had compelled her to marry Father's personal "boy," but this had not softened her toward us. Sometimes breakfast would be late, and then Hung Fang, who seemed to have the idea that the responsibilities of all the world rested squarely upon her shoulders, would have her say, though she needed little excuse.

"Hurry up! Hurry up! It is five minutes of eight!

Five minutes of eight and you haven't started eating yet. If you have not finished when it is time to go to Miss Brown, you will go without finishing!"

Then of course, since we all feared Hung Fang, because of the trouble she could cause us, we dared not rush with breakfast, for if we did it might make a noise, and silence was the rule at our home in the mornings, for Father and Mother arose late usually, because of social engagements which kept them out late almost every night.

A house of oppressive silence, then, in which we ate hurried breakfasts, goaded and hectored by Hung Fang, whose scathing tongue never ceased making cutting remarks as long as we children were within hearing, nor as far as I know, until long after we had vanished, perhaps, behind the door of Miss Brown's little home.

Here, with kindly, helpful Miss Brown, I studied English; arithmetic, which I did not like, and in which I made but faltering strides, I am afraid; geography, which intrigued me because it treated of so many places in the world which I had not yet seen; spelling, which I enjoyed thoroughly—today I am very proud of my ability to spell—and grammar.

I can see myself there memorizing my spelling lesson:

"C-o-u-g-h, cough; c-o-u-g-h, cough," while each time I spelled the word I counted on my fingers, until I had spelled the word the twenty times I had set for myself. I knew my column of strange words forward

and backward, and I never ceased delighting in proving this to Miss Brown. She would take my spelling book and call out a word. Instantly I would spell it, and she would be calling another almost before I had finished the first, so that spelling became a really entrancing game, in which Miss Brown fired words at me, and I fired them back, all properly spelled and labeled. We were like friendly enemies, shooting at each other with bullets of speech.

But arithmetic . . .

Well, I am afraid, as I said before, that arithmetic was pretty much wasted on me. In connection with my arithmetic, Father wished me to spend fifteen minutes a day learning the Chinese abacus. I spent the fifteen minutes dutifully, but they were usually wasted, and even today I use the abacus but falteringly. However, it was part of my studies.

My morning as a whole, however, was not wasted, for Miss Brown and I were in sympathy with each other; she was proud of me and my ability to absorb English. We got on famously, and whatever I have attained in English I owe to Miss Brown, and of course to Father, who brought her from England to tutor us.

In connection with English she taught us much of the Bible, which I likewise enjoyed, though I marveled at the difference between the English of the Bible and the English I learned from the grammar books. The Bible I found very puzzling. One day the Bible reading dealt

with the story of Lot and his daughters, and in all my young innocence I demanded that Miss Brown explain to me exactly what was meant, and how a man could be the father of his grandchildren. Miss Brown, I recall, was somewhat flustered about it, and gave me an explanation which did not explain at all:

"It is in the Bible," she said, "and must be accepted without question!"

Then we had lunch, watched over and eternally scolded by Hung Fang, where we made up for whatever we had missed at breakfast. Then the afternoon, which I always dreaded with a dreadful dread, for then I was to be tutored by the ogre from Honan, who through all the years could not be somehow left behind and forgotten.

The Honan tutor was as crabbed as always, and we never ceased from quarreling. I do not remember a single session with him and his hateful Chinese classics in which we did not have an argument of some kind.

He usually had a few stock phrases calculated to subdue me, which invariably failed of their purpose:

"To think," he would say to start the afternoon, "that I traveled all these hundreds of thousands of miles from my own home in Honan, to tutor an evil child like you! You are incorrigible! You will never learn anything, and it is a waste of time to teach you!"

I do not now blame the Honan teacher for what he always said to me, for he was a typical Chinese tutor,

and Chinese tutors were paid never to praise the work of their pupils, but always to speak of their efforts disparagingly, with the idea of inciting them to greater ones. How different from Miss Brown, who treated me nicely, and from whom in a few weeks I learned more than I ever learned from the austere man from Honan. How I hated him! How I disliked the sound of his voice, the way he walked, the things he said, and even the province from which he had come!

He was always making things difficult for us, just as Hung Fang was, each of them doing what they thought right, too! Hung Fang would send us to Miss Brown on time, even if we missed our breakfast, which latter event always made Miss Brown very angry with Hung Fang. The Honan tutor, if not entirely pleased with our efforts in the afternoon, tried often to keep us overtime, in order to make us review our lessons, which only increased our difficulty; for at four-thirty each afternoon, we studied Japanese, and had to be ready on time.

How I loved Japan! I gloried in those four years in the country. I liked the people, and that part of the day set aside for assimilating Japanese culture, art, and language, was faithfully dedicated to it, and for a moment or so I became almost a Japanese. I liked to dress like the Japanese, from the *geta*, wooden clogs on the feet, to the *obi*, that folded sash which is like a bundle on the hips of the Japanese woman. The room where

we studied Japanese was as thoroughly Japanese as it could be made. Here we sat on the floor, wearing no shoes, as we would have done in a Japanese home. We got our warmth, if the day were cool, from the comforting body of the Japanese *hibachi*, or bowl-like charcoal burner.

Not every day was the same, however, when it came to Japanese things. We had several teachers who came on alternate days. One day at four-thirty it would be Oye *san*, a sweet little lady who taught me the arrangement of flowers in vases, which is an art among the Japanese. She taught me how to arrange the blossoms, how to bend the stems to the proper gracefulness—an art in itself, requiring much study and practice. But I loved it, nor have I forgotten how to do it, to this day. I did so well at this particularly Japanese art that I received a diploma in the work, of which I was very proud.

Then on another afternoon, I would study Japanese dancing, and here was born my love for dances of all kinds—so long as they were graceful and full of meaning. I grew to love the dance, and promised myself that I would one day be a great dancer.

Then on another day I would study the language. By the time we were ready to leave Japan, I not only spoke the language like a native—which made my Japanese friends very proud of me, and which made me proud of myself no less—but could read the *kana*, or simplified

writing of the Japanese. Their classical written language is the same as Chinese, but this is so difficult to learn that the Japanese have simplified it into a sort of shorthand, which I mastered without difficulty. Of course, I was helped immeasurably by constant contact with Japanese children, whom I often took into Lilliput with me and introduced to my little subjects, and with whom I kept up a never-ending flow of conversation.

Even on the days when I studied the art of the flowers, and the grace of the Japanese dance, I talked incessantly with my teachers, so that while these days were not really given to the study of the language, that study was scarcely missed because I was practicing perpetually.

Then came the proudest moment of my whole life, at least up to that moment. I had shaken hands with Their Japanese Majesties, and many other things, but . . .

Well, Father's interpreters had gone away for some reason or other, and Father had never bothered to learn Japanese, much as he catered to the Japanese in other ways.

I was deep in the Chinese classics after a particularly annoying tiff with the Honan tutor. It was early afternoon, and four-thirty looked as far away as the end of time.

Then came the number one boy to the door of the study.

"Master wishes you at once!" he said to me.

"But," said the Honan tutor, "can you not see that

she is busy with her lessons—that she isn't learning a thing, probably, only pretending to study? She will be at liberty at four-thirty this afternoon!"

The number one boy smiled.

"Shall I take that message to master?" he asked.

So the tutor had to let me go, since there was at least one person in our family whom he could not browbeat, that person being my father.

I entered Father's reception room, wondering joyfully just what he wished, knowing of course that it must be terribly important, since he had called me away from those hated Chinese classics.

"This," said my father, as I ran in, "is my daughter, Der Ling!"

I turned, gasping, to see Father's visitor, who bowed to me as though I had been Mother, dressed in formal clothing at some great function.

"This," said Father to me, "is Count Hijikata! My interpreters are out and we cannot talk with each other. We have tried to write, but making Chinese characters is so slow. . . ."

Then I understood!

I was to act as interpreter, Japanese to Chinese, Chinese to Japanese, between my father, Yü Keng, and Count Hijikata!

I am proud to say that I interpreted without making a mistake, without stammering or stuttering, and that

both Father and Hijikata seemed delighted with my efforts.

Perhaps I was a bold little thing, but from the moment I learned I was to be official interpreter in this formal call, I had no feeling of nervousness, but only a desire to show Father and Hijikata that I knew Japanese like a native!

XXVIII

WISHES AND BIRTHDAYS

EVERYTHING had been lovely in Japan. I had loved the country and the people among whom I had spent my happiest days. But Father's time was short now in Japan, and we must soon return to China.

As though to give us a sign of the trouble in store for us, messages began to arrive from China, and just prior to our return to the homeland, the following incidents had transpired:

Prince Kung, who had been a life long friend of Father, and one of his protectors at the foot of the throne, against Father's many enemies, passed away; His Majesty Kwang Hsu had been betrayed by Yuan Shih Kai, and the *coup d'état* which returned Her Majesty Tzu Hsi to the power she had never really relinquished had taken place; Kang Yu Wei, friend of the deposed Emperor, together with other friends of Kwang Hsu, were fugitives from China, and Father was ordered to keep a strict watch on them, with a view to returning them to China for punishment. The world was all excited because war had been declared between Spain and the United States, though this latter event scarcely

touched us, save to add to the excitement of an excited world.

Father liked excitement, and when he heard what had happened in China he desired to return to his homeland—while I had no such desire. Father wished to return, despite the fact that messages had reached him to the effect that, immediately after the death of Prince Kung, he had once again been impeached at court by the Board of Censors, on recommendation of Father's enemies, who all were enemies for reasons which will be given in this chapter.

Li Mu Chai, as related in another place, was in Japan. Father asked him if he did not wish to be Minister after Father's departure, and when Li Mu Chai replied in the affirmative, rather excitedly, too, Father made the necessary recommendation to Yung Lu, and Li Mu Chai was appointed to succeed Father, and we knew definitely then that we were returning to China.

What a dreary day it was when the word came!

It was raining, and the roar of the rain was a constant cannonade on the roof of the legation. I pressed my nose against the windowpane, and looked out upon a world empty of hope, out into a world which was being drowned in sorrow, a world in which my little subjects in Lilliput were being drowned, a drab, dreary day which I would nevertheless have thoroughly enjoyed had it not been for the fact that we were leaving Japan where I had known so much happiness.

I was a moody child that day, with my nose against the windowpane. I did not wish to return to China, but there was nothing I could do about it, save make futile wishes—which were not so futile after all, and which gave me hope as I remembered other wishes I had made.

I had wished with all my heart that we manage somehow to get away from hateful Sha-Ssu—and Father was appointed to that post in Wu Chang; I had wished, because of my acquaintance with the family of the Japanese consul across the street from our residence in Hankow, that Father be eventually appointed Minister to Japan—and Father was duly appointed. And now, though I knew return to China was inevitable, I made a wish that we remain but a short time in China, and that Father would be appointed to some other post, either in Europe or America.

As though in answer to my wish, or as though to give me a happy omen, the rain ceased and the sun came out, and the drab garden which the rain had almost drowned came out again in all its splendor, and I had never witnessed a sight so beautiful. Even the trees, with all the dust washed off their leaves, wept slow tears of heartfelt happiness. The flowers opened and began to nod eagerly at everybody, anybody, or nobody, and their faces were little faces of happiness.

Even my little subjects in Lilliput dried their cloth-

ing, and looked the sweeter for having had their faces washed.

Then there was, as though to fill to the brim my cup of hopefulness in a world of discontent at leaving, a beautiful rainbow, at which I looked, with eyes shining I'll warrant, and made my wish again; for when you see a rainbow and make a wish, the wish always comes true. So I wished again that we remain but a short time in China, and left the window, upon whose glass remained the imprint of my nose.

I found that as a child, and even later, up to now perhaps, if I wished for anything, and wished with all my might, I always got my wish. So I had high hopes of getting this one.

But it was a sad day, just the same, when we left Japan, and I bade good-by to all the many little friends I had made, taking my last and most tragic farewell of my little subjects in the garden, whom I commended to the mercy of whoever should take my place.

Good-by to Japan, which I was not to see again for many years!

Then, later, with my heart dropping as the steamer carried us to Shanghai, the yellow waters of the sea, yellow because of the mud from China's detestable rivers, which have never failed to depress me on my many journeys back to China after voyages abroad, the long journey from Shanghai to Peking.

And all the time we were in Peking, I wished to leave China, fully believing that if I wished hard enough my wishes would come true.

Father was immediately surrounded by enemies in Peking, and though the family, save Mother perhaps, did not know it, Yung Lu was urging him to leave China again, before the trouble became so serious as to endanger the lives of all of us.

First, the Manchus, headed by the notorious Prince Tuan, declared publicly that my father was no longer a Manchu, because by leaning toward modernism he had forsaken the sacred tenets of the insular Occidentals.

The Chinese were assured that Father was intending to sell China to the foreigners!

I well remember a visit made to my father by Prince Tuan, who even then was laying plans which later resulted in the Boxer Uprising. We lived in a foreign-built house, and this, to Prince Tuan, was sacrilege. Prince Tuan came as a friend, but Father had been warned of his coming, and of the fact that Prince Tuan hated him with a deep and abiding hatred. In view of the later activities of Prince Tuan, this hatred was rather a compliment than anything else. Prince Tuan came, and asked to be shown over our house.

I remember the Prince as a man with furtive eyes, and pockmarked face, to whom I instantly took a vast dislike.

Father may perhaps have guessed it, but his visit to

our house was the visit of a spy, and when he saw how we lived he put us down instantly as that type of Chinese known during the Boxer Uprising as *er mao tzu*, or "Chinese Christians," those unfortunates who were slaughtered so brutally in the Uprising.

Right after the visit of Prince Tuan, Yung Lu sent for my father. All this I did not hear until later, but this was, in substance, the conversation which took place between Yung Lu and Father.

"Prince Tuan is your deadly enemy!"

Father nodded.

"He will do you fatal injury if he can—and he is a powerful man because of his relationship with the throne!"

"I am not afraid of him!" retorted Father.

"I know you are not afraid," said Yung Lu, "but you must think of your family! Our present minister to France will soon be recalled. Why do you not take his place? I shall be glad to recommend the appointment!"

"I refuse to be scared away by Prince Tuan, or any other of my enemies!"

"But these are dark days in China, and there is much important work to be done abroad."

Father told Yung Lu he would think it over.

During almost a year the matter rested there, and none of us knew, save perhaps Mother, and I am not sure that she knew.

But I went to Father one day.

"Father," I said, and I was wishing my very best, "why don't you leave China again? Why don't you go to America or Europe?"

Father smiled at me.

"Perhaps," was all he said, and I was just as happy as though he had actually promised, for it seemed to me I had implanted the idea in his mind, and he would have told me the idea was impossible had he not been considering it.

Time passed, while I wished for something to happen.

Then came my birthday. I was wakened in the early morning when the slave girls brought in the presents which had been showered upon me—for Father was then Minister of Foreign Affairs, and people were constrained to be nice to his children.

My birthday! Many wonderful things had happened to me on other birthdays, and I had high hopes, and was wishing for something good on this day. I looked at all my presents, then got up and looked out into the garden.

There were four soldiers on guard around our house, and I had no sooner looked out than I saw one of them come running from the direction of the gate.

"Congratulations!" he screamed, waving a piece of paper. "Congratulations!"

I thought the congratulations were for my birthday, until he shouted his explanations. You see he had read the paper, since it is no sin in China to read messages

to others. (I have seen Chinese and foreigners reading letters, with half the Chinese office force reading them at the same time over the shoulders of the addressee!)

"It is for the master," he cried. "He has been appointed Minister to France!"

Of course Father knew all about it, and when he came home he was smiling.

"And to think," I said to him, "that all this should happen on my birthday! You were ordered to Wu Chang on my birthday, with a promotion, and ordered as Minister to Japan on another birthday, and now for the third time you are honored on my birthday!"

"Yes," said Father, "you are my lucky child!"

What more could he have said to please me?

We were going to Europe, France, Paris, and my fondest wish had come true!

ON TO PARIS!

WE were going to France! My wish was being granted me! We had been in Peking about a year, and had finally managed to get back our own house, which our friend had used rent-free during our four years in Japan.

There was a garden in our courtyard, and in it, during that year, I had kept bright my memories of Japan by bringing to the garden my little subjects. They were different subjects, but I gave them the old names, told them the old stories, and I was once again sorry to leave them. They could not be taken with us to France, and so were left behind.

This time when we departed, many more "attachés" were recommended to us. On our part we cut down our staff of servants as much as we dared, and when I discovered this I had high hopes that Hung Fang would be left behind, but this hope was dashed at once, as she went with us, together with her husband and her child.

Needless to say, the Honan tutor went with us also! But I had become resigned to him as a necessary evil, not to be dropped this side of Paradise.

Multiply our procession on our previous departure—

when we had left for Japan—by two, or even three, and you will grasp something of the gaudy grandeur of this journey away from China. Everywhere we were received royally and bidden God-speed, for Father had been promoted again, and honors had been showered upon him, in spite of his many enemies, whose number became even greater when his appointment became public.

We transferred to a French steamer at Shanghai, for the long voyage to France, and for the second time I was going to Europe.

We stopped briefly at Hong Kong, our last port of call in China.

At Saigon we were entertained royally by Governor Doumer, who seldom entertained visitors who were merely passing through, and on this voyage, I realized fully the importance of my father as his country's representative to France. I must say, too, that the captain of the ship was thoroughly convinced of Father's prestige, and during all the voyage flew the flag of China at the masthead, explaining that it was seldom he carried so distinguished a passenger. Governor Doumer, at Saigon, was the soul of courtesy, and it seemed rather odd that such honor should be paid us by foreigners, when so many of our own people had disowned us. But this was to be our experience henceforth, and we soon grew accustomed to it.

At Singapore we were entertained by the Chinese

consul and foreign officials, so that our journey to France became almost a triumphal procession, which however did not turn my father's head in the least; but which, I frankly admit, gave me many ideas of my own personal importance, which I have been told I have not lost, even unto this day.

Colombo I remember as a beautiful place, where nothing of importance happened to us.

Port Said I recall merely as a place where singers came alongside the steamer and sang songs to us, while passengers dropped money down to them. It was something like Honolulu in that, because boats were not allowed to arrive or depart without this ceremony of singing—receiving the visitor from beyond the horizon gates, and sending him on his way again, to other and even more distant horizons.

An amusing thing happened on our journey through the Red Sea. Our first secretary, journeying to Europe for the first time, had asked many questions about it back in Peking, and had gone to foreign officials to secure the most authoritative information.

"The foreigners are all liars," he said in substance, "and I won't believe a thing again that any of them tell me! I will believe only what I see with my own eyes. The secretary of the French Legation said that this sea was red, and it isn't red at all! Why should he have lied about it?"

But to me it was a glorious voyage, though we made

no stops in Egypt, going straight through to Marseilles from Port Said. The deep blue of the Mediterranean suggested to me a whole new, poetic world, and I gloried in every minute we spent cruising over her deep blue bosom.

Then Marseilles, the gateway to France, and to Paris.

At Marseilles we were met by the Chinese Legation staff, were entertained by the mayor and other high officials, who treated Father as though he had been royalty, instead of merely royalty's representative.

From here we journeyed to Paris by train, and entered a new world! And of all my memories, Paris remains today as the most cherished.

But what an experience it was for most of the "attachés" we had brought with us. They were in danger of life and limb whenever they crossed the streets. We forced them into elevators for the first time, and they squealed and screamed in terror, and were so frightened they could scarcely stand erect, when the elevators stopped and we stepped forth on the floors desired. For us it was a new world, but one to which we could easily adapt ourselves. For our people. . . .

Well, could you fancy yourself making a maiden visit to Mars?

It was like that with them, and much time passed before they could adapt themselves to conditions so widely at variance with what they were accustomed to in China. But for me . . . !

A NEW WORLD OPENS

THE Chinese Legation at Paris was located in an excellent apartment house on Avenue Hoche. Our predecessor acted very strangely toward us, and helped us to get settled only to the extent demanded by ordinary courtesy. He was somewhat stingy and the apartment we took over from him was impossible, at least as to furnishing. It seemed to have been furnished from some rummage sale, which it probably had been.

There were red carpets on the floors, no two chairs matched either as to size, color or design. The curtains were green, the walls were mauve and—well, a more helter skelter apartment I had never seen up to that time.

Mother and Father made one brief survey of the apartment, and their opinions coincided:

“It simply will not do! We must begin furnishing it properly at once, before we begin to receive calls from the various diplomats.”

The apartments in themselves were of the finest, and all we needed to make them livable, and dignified enough for the occupancy of one of Father’s standing,

was a complete re-furnishing, which Mother undertook instantly.

I was fourteen years of age at this time, and curious about everything. We were wearing foreign clothes, but it was the consensus of opinion that we should go out immediately to be outfitted according to our station, and a French lady, who was a very good friend of ours, undertook to see that we went to the proper dress-maker.

She took us to Stamler & Jeanne, and this firm designed all our clothing during our four years in Paris.

A joyous experience from beginning to end. There was the hurried activity in re-furnishing the apartments, which was delegated to an interior decorator as soon as Mother was assured that her wishes would be followed as far as possible, while our French lady friend took my sister and myself to be properly outfitted.

What a noisy place Paris was then! I recall only two automobiles, queer looking contraptions which could be viewed in Park Monceau. For the most part, the street was filled with landaus, and the shod feet of fast-moving horses rang continually on the cobblestones. The streets radiated out from the Arc de Triomphe, and Paris was an easy place in which to lose oneself if one had a poor sense of direction—which I have always had in full abundance. But it was a pleasure to be lost in Paris, where every corner promised new surprises which were always fulfilled.

While Father and Mother went to present Father's credentials to President Loubet, my sister and I, since we knew that real work for us would begin soon, made the most of our opportunities. We were always out, looking the city over, thrilled at everything, buying everything we saw, most of which we did not need in the least, and becoming acquainted with Paris. I spoke French at this time, but it was not very good French, though enough to get along on.

A new language. You will recall the difficulties of our Chinese servants in Japan. The difficulties were doubled in Paris, where we had a butler, a valet, and two *femmes de chambre* who spoke nothing but French, and Chinese servants galore who spoke nothing but their native tongue. Naturally there was always trouble among the servants, but after our experiences in Japan we were quite accustomed to this.

The legation office was on the same floor, an apartment adjoining our living quarters, while the "attachés" were quartered in another set of apartments in rear of the main apartment building.

We had scarcely got settled, and Father's credentials had been presented, than old friends began to call. I must say here that Father and Mother were highly pleased with President and Madame Loubet, who were our friends during our four years in Paris, where we were to meet socially so many important figures in the diplomatic life of the French Capital.

Mother had many American friends—some whom she had met during a visit some years before to the United States, some whom she had met in China—and these came to call as soon as we were settled.

Each and every one of them had some advice to offer, and some suggestion to offer as to how we children should be educated!

I am thoroughly convinced that if we had followed all those suggestions, my sister and I would have been most thoroughly educated!

One suggestion was made which we followed, and for which I have always been glad.

"Isadora Duncan," said one lady, "is giving dancing lessons in Paris. I have girls, and your two daughters are graceful and charming. I suggest that we form a class for Miss Duncan, of our children, who will be taught together."

This suggestion was carried out, and for three years we went to Isadora Duncan for an hour and a half of dancing instruction, three days a week.

Our routine soon settled down to something like the following:

One hour in the morning was given to the study of French; and Hung Fang, as always, made sure that we were never late, even though we missed our breakfasts. But I liked French, and was fascinated by my French teacher, under whom I made rapid strides.

After French lessons, Mother having purchased a

piano almost at once, I was given singing lessons, and to these too I gave the best that was in me.

Then came an hour with Miss Brown, our English tutor, who however was quite ill at this time, and eager to return to her home.

Then came *tiffin*, which prefaced an hour that for me was not only thoroughly wasted, but was a perpetual trial besides: yes, the teacher from Honan, who tried to instill into us the tenets of the Chinese classics! I must confess, though I am ashamed to do so, that I deliberately tried to waste as much of this hour as possible, watching the clocks, waiting and praying for the hour to end, and I fancy that the Honan tutor was just as eager as I was to make an end of the daily hour of torture, for I almost hated him, and made him all the trouble possible, and he disliked me no less, so our desire to be free of each other was reciprocal.

After the hour devoted to Chinese classics, on those days when we took dancing lessons, we would then go to the studio of Isadora Duncan, to be trained in the dance. One hour and a half, three times a week, of thorough happiness, for I loved to dance, and Miss Duncan seemed to enjoy instructing us. I remember her always with the greatest pleasure. This, of course, was in the days when she was not yet the famous personage whom the world remembers today.

Our music teacher, by the way, was a Mlle. Fulcran who, the year she undertook to instruct us, won first

prize from the Conservatory of Music for her perfection in her art.

This time in Paris was perhaps the highlight of my life. It was a four-year period which was full of activity. Our house was always crowded with famous figures in the diplomatic world, through which Father moved, a dignified figure, seeming strangely out of place because he always wore his Chinese robes and emblems of his rank, yet not out of place either because he was a man who could always adapt himself, and did so. Mother, of course, was in her element, and liked to entertain. Here she could give full rein to her wishes, for Chinese ministers in the days of the Empire were plentifully supplied with money, because Her Majesty the Empress Dowager wished for her country's representatives to make the proper showing among foreigners. For this reason, I am sure, our legation was among the most showy in Paris, and a continuous stream of people from all countries came and went across our threshold.

By this time our quarters were sumptuously furnished. We had brought rich brocades with us from China, and our apartments were rapidly turned into a work of art. People liked to come to us for this reason. I often wondered, with his manifold duties, how Father managed; but calmly and collectedly he moved through his busy days, doing his duty the best he knew, making his calls—which here in Paris were legion, be-

cause there were so many more foreign representatives than ever there had been in Japan—receiving callers, giving balls and receptions.

My sister and I were still too young to take part in all the social functions, but where there is a will there is a way, and while there were no screens such as had furnished a coign of vantage for me in Sha-Ssu and Japan, there were other places from which I could safely watch the perpetual surge and flow of people—people who came out of curiosity, to see these outlanders, us, who dressed so strangely, and spoke such an outlandish gibberish, and remained to become fast friends. Many of these friends, made years ago in France, are still my friends, and never fail to recall themselves whenever I happen to be where they now live.

It was not long before I knew most of our visitors, and my sister and I formed a childish habit of listening as the butler announced the names of visitors, and then aping the walk and accents of each visitor in turn—two mischievous children who behaved like a pair of monkeys for their own pleasure.

Occasionally, if visitors happened to ask for us, at afternoon tea or some other less formal function, we were brought in and paraded, and sometimes even helped in the serving. Quite often, too, our visitors would comment upon our gracefulness, or lack of it, our charm, or lack of charm, as frankly as though we had not been present. I often wonder if older people know how easily

children are wounded, and how long it takes, if ever, to heal wounds thus carelessly given.

It took some time, however, for Mother to be brought around to the idea that my sister and I enjoyed contact with outsiders; for she was always very strict with us, right up, as a matter of fact, until the day of her death.

I recall at one of these teas, when my sister and I were entertaining friends of our own, that a very famous lady came to call, and that our juvenile friends were very desirous of seeing her close at hand. So, aided and abetted by the butler, my sister and I managed to substitute our friends for the attendants. They carried it off well, got a close view of the famous lady, while Mother looked on and almost had apoplexy, yet could do nothing at the time because we had put her in a rather embarrassing position if the cheats were discovered—but after the great visitor had left . . . ! Well, it took Father to keep my sister and me from undergoing dire punishment. Mother had little patience with the willfulness and whims of children.

We were in Paris, would be there for four years, and already the family had become part of the diplomatic circle, the center of interest, and my sister and I were consumed with longing to take our own places, to which we felt we had every right, in the very heart of things. We were both ambitious, but Mother could not be budged from her belief that friends, unless they had

passed successfully her own examination, extending over a too-long-for-us period of time, were not good for us.

At parties of young people, to which we were invited, we were never allowed to go until it was quite late, and always were forced to return home after half an hour or so—were only allowed to look in and then return, as a matter of fact, and I daresay that Mother was right, for two children as lively as my sister and I could quite easily have got into all sorts of predicaments.

We were irresponsible, eager for new thrills, eager to enjoy life and the new world into which we had been so magically transported.

WAR CLOUDS IN CHINA

FOR one glorious year Paris was a wonderland to us all. We were very busy, and enjoyed every moment of our stay, little realizing that the time was soon coming when trouble would start which would amaze and terrify the world.

I was in the Sacred Heart Convent at this time, and so not as closely in touch with affairs as I always had been before.

I heard the worst when I went home for the Easter holidays.

Father had received a laconic message from China, which read: "You are recalled. Return to China at once with your family. Prince Tuan."

This message engrossed all our attention, and the following conversation took place between my father and mother:

"There is something decidedly wrong in China," Father said.

"Why should Prince Tuan send you such a message?" Mother asked.

"That is exactly what is wrong. Prince Tuan is a member of the royal family, but he is not in favor, and

has absolutely no right to send me such a message. If I really were recalled, the word would come from the throne itself. There is a certain formality in recalling a minister, no matter what he has done or is supposed to have done. Prince Tuan is my bitter enemy. This is a trick to get us home for some evil purpose.

"Then cable Yung Lu," said Mother. "Quote this cable from Prince Tuan, and ask for confirmation."

Father did as Mother suggested. Before leaving China Father had agreed with Yung Lu upon a secret code of their own, a code which I knew, but whose workings I have now forgotten, a code which made all messages read like the weirdest gibberish, yet which meant something to Father and Yung Lu. In Father's message he quoted the cable from Prince Tuan, and asked Yung Lu for details.

Yung Lu's answer came back:

"The court knows nothing of your recall. Remain where you are whatever happens. Letter follows."

Of course then we knew that terrible things were transpiring in China, and that Prince Tuan's brazen order to Father proved he must have gained undue favor with Her Majesty Tzu Hsi, since if he were still the pariah from the court he had been hitherto, he would never have dared issue such an order, even though knowledge of it were kept secret from Her Majesty. Prince Tuan, of all men, would have known that no

matter how secret his schemes, they would reach Her Majesty in time, and this cable proved, therefore, that he did not really care if Her Majesty did know.

Father shook his head when he compared the two messages.

"It means evil days for China," he said.

Then, about a month later, came a long letter from Yung Lu, which read, in effect, as follows:

"The court is in turmoil, and you have so many enemies you would be foolish to return to China now. You would only be inviting trouble, and still would be unable to be of any service. Prince Tuan is trying to persuade Her Majesty to receive the Boxers, and for the first time since I came to court I am unable to influence her. I have tried all my diplomacy in an effort to prevent her lending ear to Prince Tuan; but while she treats me as graciously as she has always treated me, she still is interested in the words of Prince Tuan, and if she receives the Boxers, no one can guess where the trouble will end. I saw Prince Tuan the other day, and stopped to chat with him for a moment, and this conversation took place:

"'Do you not realize that you are heading into serious trouble? While I am only a commoner, and what I do makes little difference, you are Prince Tuan, member of the royal family, and if you bring disgrace upon yourself you will disgrace the entire court.'

"Prince Tuan was very discourteous to me, and was inclined to sarcasm because he said I had failed to influence Her Majesty against him, which is true.

" 'I shall gain an audience with Her Majesty,' he told me, 'and she will have an opportunity to discover for herself the invincibility of my Boxers.'

"Prince Tuan, as you know, is a worthless scoundrel, and Her Majesty herself has always believed it up to this time. But the Prince comes forward with his pleas at a most opportune time—for him! Her Majesty has been for years consumed with bitter hatred of foreigners, who would divide China among them. The Prince claims that his Boxers are invincible, that bullets and knives will not slay them. You know that this is all nonsense, as I do; but Her Majesty, in spite of my influence, is inclined to listen. Prince Tuan is a trickster, and if his Boxers are received at court he will find some way with his trickery to convince Her Majesty that he has spoken the truth about his riffraff. Whatever you do, do not come home. Prince Tuan hates you, and his power is increasing day by day. If you come home I am very much afraid he will find a way to do you and your family some terrible injury."

From this letter we began to prepare for the worst, and the very worst of our anticipations were because, in the demoralized situation at court, we could not even guess what would happen. Ta-A-Ko, whom the Empress Dowager had made Crown Prince as an act of

spite against Kwang Hsu, was the son of Prince Tuan, and it was through this scoundrelly Crown Prince that Prince Tuan attained to that evil power which bathed China in blood and startled the entire world.

So we bided our time in Paris, waiting for the blow to fall.

It came in the shape of flaming headlines in the Paris press!

MINISTER PICHON ASSASSINATED IN PEKING!

This, of course, was untrue, but in the shock of the outburst of the Boxer Uprising, after the slaying of Von Kettler, the German Minister to China, the terrified word went forth that the Boxers had assassinated all the foreign ministers in Peking. So the French, believing the first wild reports, broke the story that Minister Pichon had been assassinated.

You can readily see what this story meant to Father and his family. In the mad surprise, the sudden shock caused by the story, it would be quite natural, since China had assassinated France's minister, for France to retaliate in like manner.

So we sat and waited, and Father was perhaps the only calm and collected member of our family.

We got the first news, read it, and knew that something would happen within the next hour, if anything were due to happen at all.

Before the demonstration took place, however, Father

received a message from the Foreign Minister, which ran somewhat as follows:

"We do not know where this catastrophe will end. Naturally, you no longer are in the status of Minister from China, for as such the mob would tear you limb from limb. I am afraid for your safety. Please come to me at once, and we will arrange for you to stay in France as a protected alien until we discover exactly where we stand."

"Don't go to see him!" cried Mother. "You will be killed as you go along the streets!"

There was reason in Mother's protest, for Father, who always wore his Chinese dress, was a conspicuous figure wherever he went.

"I am not afraid," he said quietly. "I have done France no harm. Why should France harm me?"

"But Pichon probably did China no harm, either!"

"But China, and her reactions, are different, far, far different, from France and her reactions to such matters as these! France is too modern to make any demonstrations against me. Besides, the French are my friends."

"*Your* friends, yes; but not the friends of China, since China has murdered Pichon!"

"I am going to see the Foreign Minister," said Father quietly.

At this point our Chinese number one boy broke into the room. He was frightened half out of his wits.

"Master," he cried hysterically, "a mob is surrounding the place, and it is whispered that all they need is a leader to attack the Chinese Legation! You must get soldiers! You must get police! They will attack at any moment, and kill us all!"

We were all very much frightened, but Father only smiled at the excited boy. He could not, however, ignore his warning, for from the streets outside arose the unmistakable bellow of the maddened mob. We dashed to convenient windows and looked out. The street before the legation was packed with the riffraff of Paris, and they made it plain that they had come to the Chinese Legation to avenge the murder, in far-off China, of Minister Pichon. They carried weapons of all kinds, and seemed to be in a veritable frenzy of blood-lust.

Mother calmed down when it became apparent that we, indeed, faced a crisis, and turned to Father.

"Something must be done," she said quietly. "That mob is undisciplined, and almost anything may happen."

"Riffraff!" snapped Father. "A few fools see in this excitement a chance to attract attention, and have persuaded the ragamuffins of Paris to make this demonstration!"

We tried to dissuade Father from going at this time, but he disregarded our pleas, paid us no heed, and behaved as though he fully expected to return. There were no words which hinted of what we should do in

case he failed to return. He was calmly sure of himself, and believed implicitly that he would return, though his way led through the blood-mad mob which surrounded the Chinese Legation.

Their shouts and screams came plainly up to us, and there was no mistaking the grim temper of the mob.

Quietly, with no fuss or feathers, Father prepared to go to see the Foreign Minister.

He went down to the street, and at that moment, as never before, I understood exactly how proud I was of that Manchu father of mine. Father left the apartment house as calmly as he had left it a thousand times before, while from far above we watched every move with bated breath, expecting something terrible to happen.

If Father even saw the mob which surged forward as he appeared, I'll wager not a person in the mob realized it. Without a glance to right or left, without even a pause, without a second of hesitation, he strode directly toward the mob as though he hadn't a care in the world, as though he had no personal interest in the reason why the mob had gathered, and . . .

What was it? What was it about Father which caused the miracle?

I do not know. I never shall know. This, however, I know because I saw it:

That mob which surrounded the legation, mouthing threats to avenge the "brutal murder" of Pichon in

Peking, opened up for Father, far to right and left, and he walked through them, calm and sure of tread, without looking to right or left, unhurried, unafraid, without so much as a cane in his hand for protection! Nor did the flood of humanity close the path behind him until he had entirely walked through the crowd and had proceeded on his way to answer in person the note sent him by the Foreign Minister. He did not even look back, and silence fell over the mob which he had so simply ignored.

Later, when he returned, the mob had dispersed, and Father never even referred to his experience, save to comment upon the fact that the Foreign Minister held him, Father, entirely blameless in what had happened in China, and would protect us as far as it lay within his power to do so.

And so the news which horrified the world broke in Paris, and everywhere else, and the world woke up to the fact that the Boxers had risen, and were even then striving, behind their knives and their *gingals*, to destroy the legations in Peking, and to slay every foreigner in China.

The situation for Father, and for all of us, was almost untenable; but with the calm surety, the quiet self-confidence which was his strength, Father went his way, doing the best he knew, as always, to assist in bringing order out of chaos.

It was not long until we received word from China

as to what had happened there, and all this I have told in another place; but when the final word came we understood to the full exactly what had prompted those messages from Prince Tuan.

The Prince for years had been planning his *coup*. Years of unceasing effort had gone into his despicable schemes. The world today knows what he did to foreigners, and to the *er mao tzu*, or "Chinese Christians." These latter, Chinese who had accepted the Christian faith, were slaughtered wherever found, brutally and without mercy—and had we returned to China at the behest of Prince Tuan, it would have meant the end of the family Yü Keng. . . .

For we were *er mao tzu*, and Prince Tuan wished us to return in time to suffer the fate which he intended meting out to foreigners and "Chinese Christians."

XXXII

RUMORS, MESSAGES, BEDLAM

THE mob, as a mob, had been dispersed from about the apartment which housed our legation; but for many days, until the word had got through that, after all, Pichon had escaped with his life, there were all sorts of threats against us. I must say here that the French Government, although she had severed relations with China, treated us as a host would treat the honored guest. For, said Minister Delcassé, the Boxer Uprising was no fault of Father's, and Father and his family had every right to governmental protection.

We were required, however, to remain within the legation. Mounted police guarded us whenever we were absolutely compelled to go abroad, while no strangers were allowed above the ground floor of the apartment house until they had been thoroughly and completely identified by some resident who was well known.

Our secretary was called to the telephone a dozen times a day to receive threatening messages, of which this one is an example:

"Hello! What is going on at the legation? I wish to speak to the Chinese Minister."

"He is busy. Who are you?"

"Who I am makes no difference. Please take this message to the Minister: tell him to eat a hearty meal, since his next one is the last he will eat on earth!"

"Pig!" snapped our French butler when he heard. Our French servants were loyal during the entire trouble, while our Chinese attendants were impossible. They were frightened out of their wits all the time, and yelling to be sent back to China, which of course was impossible, though we could not convince them of this.

The French people, throughout, were wonderful to us, and the mob which had gathered was composed of riffraff, and led by men who were not even French.

One man ran around the block on which the apartment house was located, yelling over and over again:

"Pichon is dead! We must have revenge! Kill the Chinese Minister! Kill his secretaries! Burn the legation!"

The man, it was later discovered, was a native of Portugal.

We were protected from active violence by the French Government, and our legation could not well be burned down, since it was in an apartment house which sheltered hundreds of French people.

Chinese residents in France sought the legation for protection, and of course had to be turned away, though it was almost impossible to convince them they were in no danger.

A man stood perpetual guard outside our doors.

Even visitors to others in the apartment house were carefully examined. One man managed to get in, and to reach our door. Our guard caught him, and found upon him a paper which read as follows:

"The Chinese Minister and his family are doomed. I have placed explosives underneath the apartment house!"

This man, of course, was a crank. No explosives were found, though a friend of Mother's, living in the apartment, came to her and said smilingly:

"You know, it is as much as one's life is worth to live in the same house with you people at this time!"

Messages began to arrive from China. They came at the rate of four a day, and always they brought bad news, until Father grew to dread the arrival of messages from China, grew to dread the sound of the telephone.

Here are some messages actually received from China at that time:

"Your house destroyed in Peking. Your curio room utterly looted and such things as could not be carried away have been rendered valueless."

This message was from Yung Lu, always a close friend of my father. Later, back in China, Yung Lu told my father how it had happened. Prince Tuan had sent his Boxers to destroy the house, because it was "foreign built," and gave them permission to loot as they willed. Then next day, after the destruction of our wonderful dwelling in Peking, Prince Tuan said to Yung Lu:

"I have destroyed the house of your friend Yü Keng. I am only sorry that he and his family were not inside it when we burned it down. But I shall punish them yet. He is a traitor."

"He is not a traitor," said Yung Lu, "and has always done the best he knew for China."

"He is in sympathy with foreigners. He is trying to sell China to the foreign powers. He is no longer a Manchu. He has turned Chinese!"

You must understand that the Chinese regarded the Manchus as invading barbarians, and that, to the Manchus, to be called a Chinese was considered an insult. Father did have many friends among the Chinese, just as he had friends among all other nations, for he firmly believed that the future of China rested in her ability to strengthen her relations with foreign powers. At this time Father was already looking forward to the time when there would be no "Manchus" and "Chinese," but all would be "Chinese."

But to continue the messages from China. Here is another one from Yung Lu:

"Your cousin's family is entirely gone. Your cousin committed suicide to escape torture—because he *was* your cousin—and his daughters committed suicide to save themselves from forcible submission to Prince Tuan's Boxers. They jumped down a well."

How many wells in Peking were clogged with suicides because of the bestiality of Prince Tuan's Boxers?

During these terrible days, French newspaper reporters were with my father all the time. There was little he could tell them.

"Gentlemen," he would say, "I know no more about what is happening in China than you do! Here is a cable from there, a message from the Grand Councilor!"

What big stories the reporters could make from a small message like the two I have paraphrased above!

One gray haired old reporter came in, all excited, and put this question to Father:

"I have heard that the foreign relief columns have reached Peking, and that they have begun to retaliate for the Boxer horror by blowing up Tung Ling and Hsi Ling. Is the report true?"

"Tung Ling and Hsi Ling are the burial places of China's Emperors and Empresses," said Father, "and they are a long way from Peking. You can rest assured that the story is untrue!"

But it made flaming headlines, just the same, the way the reporter told it.

Then a Portuguese friend of mine, a little girl who lived in the same apartment, came to see me, and she was tremendously excited.

"You know," she said, "you must be very, very careful! I have just heard that someone has offered ten thousand francs to anyone who will kill your father; ten thousand francs additional for the murder of your

secretaries, and a total of fifty thousand francs for the killing of the entire family of Yü Keng!"

Of course, childlike, I was frightened, and inclined to believe this absurd tale, which I took immediately to Father, accompanied by the little girl who had brought the story.

"At last," said Father, half humorously, when I had blurted out the tale, "I discover exactly how much I am worth! How insulting! A mere ten thousand francs for the life of a Chinese minister!"

We now, of course, were taking no part in social festivities of any kind, and Father felt that, until the trouble had been settled, we should leave France so that the family might be able to leave their quarters occasionally.

We had always wished to see Switzerland, and so made plans to go there. France did not ask us to leave, and M. Delcassé even said that France would be delighted to have us remain, not as Chinese Minister, of course, but as a guest of the country. Father objected to this on the ground that he did not care to make additional trouble for his friends in France, and so preparations went on. We were going to Geneva.

We had all our Chinese servants on our hands, of course; there was no way to get any of them back to China; and Father's allowance as a minister had been stopped with the Boxer Uprising. So we were compelled to dip into our own private resources for every

cent expended. This was rather discouraging, for we were not especially eager to cart all those "attachés" with us to Switzerland, when they didn't wish to go, were continually complaining, and were of no value to us at all. But of course it was impossible to leave them behind. They would have died of fright within the first twenty-four hours!

Now came the question of our lease on the legation offices and our own apartments. We had them on lease, and were being compelled by circumstances to leave. Father never was a business man, but he did think that, owing to the fact that we were being forced to go by force of circumstances, we should not be compelled to pay for the apartment during our absence. Since we had the finest apartment in the building, the amount involved was considerable.

So Father, though he did not know it then, prepared to pay the highest word rate for unpublished matter about which I have ever heard!

He went to a French lawyer, showed him the lease, and asked, in effect, this question:

"I am going to Switzerland until relations between China and France have been amicably adjusted. I am going through no fault of my own, but because I am compelled to go. Must I then, because of this lease, pay for our apartments during my absence in Switzerland?"

The lawyer took the lease, read it over carefully, looked at Father for a moment and said:

"Yes!"

His fee was four thousand francs!

One of the last messages we received from China, before our departure for Switzerland was to the effect that the relief columns had reached Peking, and that the court had fled inland.

"Her Majesty will never again see Peking," said Mother dolefully.

"I will lay you a wager," said Father, "that she does return to Peking, and that during her exile, wherever she is going, she will conduct her court as she has always conducted it."

My father, you see, knew more about the indomitable will power of Her Majesty Tzu Hsi than any of us—up to this time.

THE KOWTOW

WE remained in Paris only long enough to show that we were not leaving through fear, after which we went to Geneva, where we rented a beautiful villa—in which in other circumstances we would have been supremely happy.

But in those days all nations were pointing the finger of scorn at China, and we never went forth from the villa that “foreigners” did not point the finger of scorn at us, and point us out as the representatives of the hateful barbarians who had fired upon the foreign legations in Peking.

So we went out but rarely, and our stay in Geneva was virtually a journey into exile.

After a time we decided to return to Paris. At Geneva, of course, our studies went on apace, for, even though the heavens fell, Father insisted that his children be educated.

How happy we were to return to Paris, where we resumed our old way of living, and our days were crowded again with the old interests!

Then the telegrams began to arrive again.

This time, where previous telegrams had reported the

destruction of our home in Peking, the suicide of our cousin's family, *et cetera*, the telegrams were of a more hopeful nature, at least so I gathered from my father's attitude.

The first message, or almost the first, told that the foreign troops had entered Peking, and that there was sharp reprisal against the Boxers.

"I am really glad," said my father. "This, I think, will be a much needed lesson to the Manchus. I am a Manchu, and I am proud of my line, but we are so conservative we are not fit to rule!"

This, of course, was the rankest heresy. But while Father, as he said, was a true Manchu, and proud of the fact that his ancestor came to China with the first Manchu Emperor, he could at the same time recognize their shortcomings, their narrow-mindedness, short-sightedness, and their conservativeness which amounted to a most distinct, oftentimes appalling, fault.

This chapter will serve to show the narrow-mindedness inherent in the old customs, and of the internal strife which my father always faced because he leaned toward modernism.

A friend brought me two plays to read: "The Magistrate" and "Sweet Lavender." I was interested in the stage, even then—when I was nearing fifteen years of age, and I was particularly taken with "Sweet Lavender," and conceived the idea of putting on the play. I knew of course that there would be tremendous opposi-

tion from the legation staff, for in China then, and even today, the stage is taboo, and no woman of gentle birth would even think of addressing, or even noticing, an actor on the street. But I was fifteen, my father thought it would amuse and interest me, and so it was planned to put on "Sweet Lavender" as a sort of childish interpretation of our own.

A boy of my own age, a boy whom I liked very much, and who liked me—what harm in the affections of mere children?—was chosen to play opposite me, and, in time taken from our studies, we rehearsed "Sweet Lavender" until we were letter perfect, and the time came for a dress rehearsal.

In all innocence I asked all my friends to the dress rehearsal, including our own legation staff.

The rehearsal began.

At a certain place in the play the boy who played opposite me was supposed to take me in his arms and comfort me: a place that was rather moistly sentimental, where I wept bitterly and the boy patted me, touched my hair—perhaps even kissed me, though I do not remember for sure—and tried to make me quit crying.

I did not know until later that the wife of Father's secretary got up in the middle of this scene, and took her ten year old son out of the theater, because she felt that this scene was too indecent for her son to witness!

To my mind, that dress rehearsal was a triumph, but our old-fashioned secretary thought differently, and

made the following observations to the rest of the legation staff:

"It is absolutely outrageous! I shall spend every cent I have to induce the Censors to denounce the Minister to the throne! Imagine a Chinese minister allowing his daughter to take part in a bedroom scene! She is almost grown up, according to the Chinese idea, and this scene is too indecent for anyone to see!"

Most of the remainder of the staff did not agree with the secretary, and told him that he was absolutely wrong in criticizing my father and me, even though he had been with Father for many years, and was an old friend in the bargain. One member of the staff told the secretary he felt it his duty to tell my father what the secretary had said.

"Go ahead and tell him!" retorted the secretary. "Tell him also that I am ready to repeat it to him directly!"

So the matter was reported to Father. He immediately sent for the secretary, who spoke as follows:

"Of course I said it! It was outrageous! A Manchu gentleman of your rank, whose ancestors came to China with the first Manchu Emperor, to even allow your daughter to associate with a man! It is not according to the custom, and your daughter's reputation will be ruined! I am not so sure that the affair has not gone far enough . . ."

Here my father stopped the tirade of the secretary.

"I do not care what you say about me," he said, "and



I STOOD RATHER STIFFLY TO RECEIVE THE KOWTOW OF OUR SECRETARY

I realize that I cannot well discharge you in a foreign country. Nor will I discuss with you this matter of my daughter's participation in a perfectly innocent play. So, say what you wish about me, but if ever you mention another word that is derogatory about one of my daughters I will kill you if I am decapitated for it! You should be thoroughly ashamed of your attempt to blacken the character of a mere child!"

The secretary, however, was unconvinced, until the rest of the staff brought home to him how inexcusably rude he had been, and persuaded him that the only proper course for him to pursue was to go to Father and apologize.

He came to offer his apologies, but Father stopped him.

"You owe me no apologies," he said coldly, "for what you said about me is nothing. But to me my daughters are more precious and sweet than anything in all the world. You must make your apologies to Der Ling in my presence, and must kowtow to her to show your sincerity!"

"What? Kowtow to a mere child!"

"Did you think of her as a mere child when you tried to ruin her reputation?"

The secretary saw the justice of this, and I was called in, the whole thing related to me, and I stood rather stiffly, wondering no little, to receive the kowtow of our secretary, who dropped to his knees before me, and

touched his head most humbly to the floor. To you who do not know China it may seem silly, and an uncalled-for humbling of an old man—the secretary was almost as old as Father—but to me that kowtow meant much, for which reason I shall never forget it, nor the spirit of Father which prompted it.

This will serve to show the narrow-mindedness of our people at this time.

A party of Chinese had journeyed to London to witness the coronation of King Edward—we had entertained them at Marseilles en route—and the coronation had been delayed because of Edward's illness. The party, therefore—composed of Prince Tsai Chen, a son of Prince Ching; Sir Liang, who had been knighted by the British Crown for services rendered; and "Jack" Wang, universally known by this odd name because he had graduated from Yale—came to Paris, where we received them as royally as we knew how, and were so pleased with them all that we wished them to stay indefinitely. They had a huge staff, as we had, and troubles began again.

My sister and I liked Prince Tsai Chen immensely. He was little more than a boy, very handsome, well educated, and his tastes were the same as ours in many things. He was very much taken with my sister, though he and I quarreled most of the time—and enjoyed it thoroughly—and seemed not to get on at all.

We went everywhere, large parties of us; but in the

Prince's retinue was none other than the old-fashioned Wong Ta Chih, whom you will remember from Japan. And tongues began wagging again! Assuredly, if we followed Chinese custom to the letter, there would have been no way at all that two young Manchu girls, even in so gay a capital as Paris, could find outlet for their overflow of animal spirits. We were full of life, always on the go, always eager for new thrills, which at the same time were as innocent as such things usually are at fifteen.

But Wong Ta Chih started talking, and what he had to say, as later reported to my father, was as follows:

"The Prince is at the Minister's home almost day and night! They go out to dinners together—the Prince and Yü Keng's daughters—out to dances, where they dance together and he puts his arm around her waist, around the waist of each of the Minister's daughters in turn! The reputation of those girls will be ruined, and no one will ever wish to marry them! The Minister should be denounced to the throne for allowing it!"

But, not knowing what was going on, we went blithely on our way, thoroughly enjoying ourselves, with not a thought as to the trouble brewing for us.

By this time I was somewhat interested in ballet dancing, and had had considerable instruction in it. I was going to conduct a sort of ballet myself, and was even then rehearsing for it. Prince Tsai Chen was with us so much, and we liked him so thoroughly, he was such a

thoroughly likable Manchu, that I conceived the idea of giving the ballet for the Prince, Sir Liang, and Jack Wang, together with my own people; but my friends, and the Prince's friends, who knew what had been said after the showing of "Sweet Lavender," dissuaded me from inviting the Prince's staff or our own legation staff.

They heard about the whole thing, nevertheless, and were furious. Wong Ta Chih started the story, which was really very terrible, and was based solely on his own imaginings. I discovered, much to my surprise, after the story got well bruited about, that I had brazenly danced in the nude for the delectation of the Prince and his party!

If memory carries you back to the usual costume of the stage in the early nineteen hundreds, you will readily realize how silly this accusation was.

The story got to the Prince first, who instantly realized his responsibilities to my sister and me. He did not care, in common with my father, what was said about him, but he did care about our reputations, and especially that of my sister. Sir Liang went to the Prince—Liang wished to marry my sister—and told him that the only thing for him to do was to cut short his visit to France.

"But why?" demanded my father. "We like you, and expect you to remain in Paris for several months yet."

Then the Prince told my father what had been said,

and it was finally agreed that Prince Tsai Chen and his party would leave.

This was all very foolish, of course, but will serve to show just how narrow-minded our people were even where we, who were as modern as Chinese could be, were concerned.

The foreign powers were now demanding all sorts of things from China as a result of the Boxer Uprising, which had been quelled by foreign troops, and I recall quite plainly what Father had to say about it.

"This sounds unpatriotic," he said, "but I feel that this will be a much-needed lesson to us! It serves us exactly right, and will do more than any other one thing to show us that we must make amends, and convince the world that we are not the barbarians they think we are, and which we seem to have proved ourselves to be in this Uprising! Sometimes I am almost ashamed of the fact that I am a Manchu, which is probably natural, since so many Manchus have insisted that I have turned Chinese and am no longer a Manchu in any case!"

Word came that Li Hung Chang had been taken from his sickbed to sign the treaty with the foreigners. It was the last service of Li Hung Chang to his country, for he died, as I remember, two days after the treaty had been signed.

Then came the word of the famous "black list," containing the names of those responsible for the Boxer fuss, with Prince Tuan's name among them.

The Kaiser demanded that a Manchu Prince, one of royal blood, as closely allied to the throne as possible, should come to Berlin to apologize in person to the Kaiser for the killing of Von Kettler, and in all good faith Prince Chun, father of the famous "Boy Emperor," was sent to Berlin on this mission.

He reached Berlin, sent word to the Kaiser of his arrival, and sought the audience he had come so far to arrange.

Back to Prince Chun came the imperial will of the Kaiser:

"I will receive you only on condition that you kowtow before me!"

Fancy what this sort of thing looked like when the newspapers got the story!

Prince Chun's staff, frightened half out of their wits, wished Prince Chun to go through with it, and abase himself at the feet of a foreign Emperor. The Prince, who was just a youth, looked to his personal advisor for a way out of the difficulty, and the words of the advisor, as they later came to Father, and so to me, were about as follows:

"A Prince of the ruling house of China kowtows to no Emperor save his own! I came in good faith to offer the apology demanded by Your Majesty, and am still willing to offer it. But I will not kowtow!"

"The Kaiser will take and kill us!" wailed the staff of the Prince.

"Let him!" replied the Prince, through the lips of his courageous advisor. "The Prince will not kowtow!"

The newspapers made a great to-do about it, and the discussion was sent to the ends of the earth. The Kaiser was adamant, as was Prince Chun, who sent a telegram to Father, asking for his opinion as to whether or not he should kowtow to the Kaiser.

Father's reply was brief and decidedly to the point.

"No! It is not a German custom! It is our own custom, and the kowtow is for your own Emperor and none other!"

Then did the French reporters flock to the legation, eager for the story.

"Did I kowtow to Loubet when I presented my credentials? Does our minister to England kowtow to the King? Prince Chun will return to China without tendering the apology before he will kowtow to the German Kaiser!"

"Whether he kowtows or not," said the reporters, "we want the story. Won't you bring in your secretaries and let us take a picture of you kowtowing to one another?"

My father smiled.

"It is not the custom of even the barbarian Chinese to play the monkey so that the press will have its stories, and the public be thrilled with a view of a Chinese minister on his knees to his own secretary! No!"

But even this much was sufficient for the reporters to

get their "story." It screamed in headlines across the pages of Paris newspapers, and what the reporters lacked in knowledge they made up for in the picturesqueness of their imaginations.

MY FATHER'S ILLNESS

As a result of all his troubles before, during and immediately after the Boxer Uprising, Father's health began to fail rapidly. Doctors were called in who informed him that he must get away from the cares and worries of his office, leave all business affairs to a secretary, and travel. It was little wonder that Father began to fail. He was misunderstood at home in China, was constantly being denounced to the throne, had lost a huge amount of valuables when Peking was looted by the Boxers—and others—had lost friends and relatives. The misunderstanding at home was predicated upon his leaning toward reform in China, which he felt that China sorely needed. The loss of valuables did not weigh so heavily upon him, save that he felt he should return shortly to China to straighten out his affairs. Of course, some seventy-three trunks in storage in Peking contained priceless heirlooms of the family, many of which had come to China when the first Manchus came, and these were ruthlessly looted.

But mere loss of wealth did not worry Father especially, save that in just so much would he be unable to provide for his family in case of his demise.

Then France, or rather a certain portion of her population, had been inimical toward him, after the first news of the Uprising came, and there had been many threats against his life, as mentioned before. He felt that all these things were poor reward for a lifetime of service to his country, which persisted in misunderstanding him.

The doctors prevailed upon him to take a trip through Europe, incognito. This was not easy for Father since he always wore Chinese dress. However, he arranged everything in Paris the best he could and we departed for Madrid. This journey was taken so hurriedly that my memory of it is just a swiftly shifting kaleidoscope of changing scenes, new faces, strange tongues. Our stay at each of the cities was of the briefest, for we had no official receptions to bother us, were merely resting from previous excitements. We spent but six weeks in Madrid.

Of course we had many friends who came to see us, but for the most part we moved quietly. I wanted Father to arrange for an audience with the King of Spain, but he refused because of the fact that he did not wish to be bothered with official duties of any nature whatsoever.

He changed slightly when we went to Rome, for Monseigneur Favier, of Boxer fame, who had baptized me years before, had arranged an audience for us with the Pope, who decorated my father. This was Leo XIII,

who patted my head and told me I would be a great woman. He was a great man; but not an especially inspired prophet! Today I possess the decoration he gave my father.

From Rome, where we spent two weeks, we traveled rather extensively over Italy, taking two slow months to the task. We left Italy for Germany, where we spent a month in Berlin. The Chinese Minister there had been a boyhood chum of my father, and neither of them wished to miss this opportunity to renew acquaintance and to discuss old times. I am very much afraid that during this brief month Her Majesty Tzu Hsi's business in Berlin was rather sadly neglected.

From Berlin we journeyed to St. Petersburg, of which I have but the haziest memories.

Then we returned to Paris. Father had been failing steadily, and the journey seemed to have benefited him but little. However, the time for his recall was very close, and he returned to Paris in anticipation of his early orders back to China.

His recall was awaiting him when we returned.

He was to return to China immediately upon the arrival in Paris of his relief, Minister Sun Pao Chi.

There is one little incident in connection with our last days in Paris which I recall now with something of a thrill, though at the time it made little impression upon me.

My sister and I were in a jewelry store in company

with an American lady named Skidmore. Of course we all spoke French when in Paris, but Miss Skidmore spoke English. She was a famous writer, as I recall, and died but recently. While we were pricing things in the store, three ladies came in and stood near us, and one of them heard Miss Skidmore speaking English, and immediately addressed her in that language.

"Please tell us who these little ladies are," referring to my sister and me. "Are they Chinese or Japanese?"

"They are the daughters of the Chinese Minister to France," said Miss Skidmore hurriedly, "and they speak and understand English. Would you care to meet them?"

The ladies said they would be delighted, and I fancy that my eyes grew very large as the ladies were introduced as "Princess" Elizabeth, Princess Something Else, and Princess So-and-So. Certainly these were great folk.

Just how great each of the three was I do not know.

But today the lady introduced to us as Princess Elizabeth is Queen of the Belgians! And I met her in a jewelry store in Paris! "Ships that pass in the night, and speak each other in passing."

The new minister had arrived. He was not friendly toward Father. Some of the legation folk, who understood the workings of the legation—interpreters, secretaries, etc.—were to remain in France to serve under the new minister, who gave instructions to them even before Father's departure; and our head interpreter re-

peated his instructions, or the gist of them, to Father. These were the orders of Sun Pao Chi:

"I wish to conduct everything exactly opposite to the way it has been conducted by Yü Keng. He is a traitor! He wished to sell China to the foreigners, I wish to save her!"

But Father, who had experienced this sort of thing all his life, and all because he wished to see China take her rightful place among the great nations of the world, paid no attention to the attitude of the new minister.

We were soon to return to China, and Father called me to him.

"Elizabeth" (the name under which I was christened) he said, "we are to return soon to China, where all your liberties will be curtailed, and you will be compelled to live in the old-fashioned Chinese way. I must return to Peking to straighten out my affairs, though I would prefer to go to Washington, which would be my next post in the natural course of events. But I must return to China, and unless my health tends to improve, which I very much doubt, I shall probably never leave China again!

"So, since your liberties are so soon to be lost, I wish, if you wish it, for you to make your official *début*. You may arrange everything yourself, invite whom you like, give whatever favors you wish, make it as glorious a *début* as possible, for I fear it is one of the last things I can do for you."

Mother opposed my Paris début on the ground that I was too young, but Father was calmly adamant, and so I made my formal entrance to society, arranged everything myself—and the memory of my début is one of the happiest of my life, though tinged with melancholy somewhat because of Father's illness. Not for a minute did I believe, however, that he spoke with the voice of prophecy when he said that he would never again leave China. I looked forward with sure confidence to going to Washington when Father should be made Minister to the United States, where the four years of his stay would be just exactly right for my contemplated, secretly much-wished-for entrance to and graduation from Vassar—one dream that was never to be realized.

And so we left Paris, and carried with us many fond memories, mingled with memories that were bitter-sweet, at least for Father.

I did not realize, did not even guess, that when we arrived in China life would take a new turn for me, and that for almost three years, as a lady-in-waiting to Her Majesty, all my world was to be turned topsy-turvy, and I myself would receive from Her Majesty Tzu Hsi the rank and title of Princess.

There was, however, one more important event which transpired before our departure for China.

We were invited by President Loubet to a reception given for King Oscar of Sweden, to whom I was presented, and who spoke to me as follows:

"You are the first Chinese young lady I have ever met!"

Then he took my hand, bowed and said in French:

"My homage to you!"

This reception was a gala affair, and I recall especially the red velvet cord which prevented the general public from mingling with the diplomatic people. But they came as close as they could, and stared at us with open mouthed curiosity. There was little wonder, for this affair was one of the most gaudy affairs I have ever witnessed. All the foreign diplomats were dressed in the official garments of their respective countries, and almost every nationality under the sun was represented. Beautiful women in fine raiment, decked with flaming jewels, officers in full dress—the whole effect too beautiful to be described. I remember especially the rose-colored velvet uniform, trimmed with gold, of an Austrian officer. He fascinated me. Though I did not meet him, he became instantly one of the loves of my childhood.

Somehow, though, they all reminded me of the puppets on that clock Chang Chi Tung had sent to Her Majesty from Wu Chang—those puppets who came out when the clock was striking and danced the minuet with mechanical precision.

A puppet show of mechanical brilliance which, when the curtain dropped after the performance, left nothing but useless tinsel behind it.

FATHER AND I

ONE other important happening must be taken up before our return to China, which Father was destined never to leave again.

Our Chinese number one boy came to Father one morning, wildly excited, and informed him that a Chinese gentleman was calling and wished to see my father for a moment.

"Bring his card," said Father.

"He has no card," replied the boy. "It is very important, he says, but he will keep you for but a minute."

I was wildly excited, scenting a mystery, but I did not learn the truth until after the man of mystery had departed, nor did I ever learn exactly what passed between my father and him.

Father was closeted with the stranger in our own rooms—not the Legation offices—for a few minutes only, after which his visitor departed and Father and Mother went into a room and locked the door to discuss the matter.

"Who was it?" I demanded of Father as soon as I could get his ear.

"The one man in the world whom Her Majesty Tzu Hsi wishes captured and returned to China for punishment! The one man she hates above all others! The one man whom all Chinese ministers are ordered to arrest if he puts his feet on Chinese territory; a friend of mine before his trouble came: Sun Yat-sen! Had he entered the legation office, a few doors down, I would have been in duty bound to arrest him! But he came to my home instead. I told him he must never come to me, though I would see him at some other place if he wished!"

And that is all I ever knew about the mysterious visit of the exile, Sun Yat-sen, to my father in Paris, nor do I recall at what exact period of our four years he came in contact with Father.

Today the name of Sun Yat-sen is great in New China. My father could have destroyed him, and was his friend instead. Nor in this did he feel that he was disloyal to Her Majesty.

But our time was up in Paris, and we were returning home to China, though I must admit that I never truly regarded China as home, because I had lived most of my life in other countries, had been educated outside China, and was a thorough cosmopolite.

But we returned, and for me, and for my sister, all the world was changed.

I have already told in "Two Years in the Forbidden City" of my life at the Manchu Court, where I spent

nearer three years than two, and where Her Majesty bestowed upon me the title of Princess which, despite the fact that I was one person in four hundred million who said "No" to her and was not punished, I kept until the fall of the Dynasty. The title is still one of my most valued possessions, for it is brushed in the hand of Her Majesty.

But how did I disobey her?

When I went to court I was eighteen years of age, the age when Chinese girls are already married, and was but a child still. How I hated to leave Father, who never expected to be well again, and whose expectations were realized. He prayed Her Majesty to retire him from government service, and she refused, giving him, however, six months' leave in which to recuperate. Then she took from him his two daughters, which may have had something to do with the fact that he failed rapidly.

"I am worried about you," said my father many times, "because you are different from other Chinese girls. You are a Manchu, and have been reared as an Occidental. The Chinese will never understand you, and if you marry among your own kind you will be unhappy. You must marry some day, though I dread to think of it. I fear you will never be happy with any man!"

But for me there were no dark clouds across the face of the future, because, eighteen though I was, I was still the child who, in Japan, had talked to my subjects in

Lilliput as though they had been real flesh and blood people. So I merely laughed at Father's seriousness.

But after I had gone to court, how differently people treated us all! Enemies became servile friends, sought favors they thought I could get for them, and the busybody matchmakers would give my father no rest. Proposals came to him in numbers every day, but to everyone he had the same answer:

"NO!"

"But you can't keep your daughter forever," they objected.

"I shall allow her to choose for herself," said Father to them all.

What sacrilege this, in a country where for thousands of years parents had arranged marriages! The following exchange of telegrams will show how people regarded a prospective marriage between myself and some gentleman I had never seen.

From a viceroy to Father:

"We have always been the best of friends. Let us now make the tie even closer. I wish to arrange a marriage between my son and your older daughter."

To this telegram my father made reply:

"Ten thousand times no!"

Back came the answer:

"What are the reasons?"

And Father answered:

"Too many!"

To me all the proposals, the busybody activities of matchmakers, were extremely thrilling, but nothing serious. I had grown to depend upon Father in all things, he had never failed me, and I knew he would not marry me off to someone I had never seen, and about whom I cared nothing at all.

And then came the bombshell, the totally unexpected. It happened at court, the court of a decaying Dynasty, where the clock of the dancing puppets was a symbol that we all were but a puppet show after all, though then it was deadly serious.

Her Majesty Tzu Hsi threw the bombshell.

"You are old enough to marry," said Her Majesty to me, "and I have just the man in mind for you! He is young, worth millions, and is a Baron!"

"But I don't wish to marry," I stormed, and with those words I forfeited my head. No living person had ever questioned the words of Tzu Hsi, yet I did, because I was her favorite.

"But he is son of Yung Lu, faithful to me all these many years. He has millions, and is just the match for you!"

(This man whom the Empress Dowager chose for me - still lives. He is the Uncle of the "Boy Emperor.")

Then I realized the seriousness of Her Majesty's words. I pretended to be sick and made a visit to Father, to whom I explained what had happened at court.

"Do you care for him?" he asked. "Does his title appeal to you? Do you care about his millions?"

"No," I wept, "I hate the thought of marriage to a Manchu. I care nothing for his millions. . . ."

"This is a bad marriage," said my sick father. "I will not tell you how to prevent it, for I do not wish you to get into any more trouble than you already have. You are clever. I leave it to you to find a way out."

"But I can't refuse," I wailed. "It is being arranged by Her Majesty, the greatest honor she could bestow upon me, and if I go counter to her wishes she will have me decapitated!"

My father was silent for but a moment.

"I had rather see you decapitated," he said, "than see you married to this man!"

"And I," I replied, "had rather be dead than marry him!"

So I resolved to defy Her Majesty, something that no one had ever succeeded in doing. Sun Yat-sen had done it, and was an exile from China with a price on his head. Kang Yu Wei had tried it, and China knew him no more. Others had tried it, and their heads had been cut off. But I resolved not to marry this man Her Majesty had chosen. And when I returned to court I gave my answer, and from that day on expected to be decapitated for disobedience.

But even while Father and I were discussing the matter, people who had heard what Her Majesty was ar-

ranging, about which she had spoken but a few hours before, were sending congratulations to Father anent the forthcoming marriage, and to each of these congratulations Father made reply:

"My daughter shall not marry this man!"

Even the foreigners in Peking thought I was a fool to refuse this man and his millions, but refuse him I did, and kept my head besides. Later another marriage was arranged for him, and his wife died because of his cruelty to her. There, but for the grace of God, died this humble writer!

"Always remember," my father used to tell me, "that no matter what troubles you have, I understand you! I am afraid there are few in this world who will, but I do, because you are my child."

The sympathy between us never lessened, and it still exists today, though Father has been gone from this world for over twenty years.

And so we come to the last chapter, which should be sad but isn't, because it showed me at the very last the sublime nobility of my father, Yü Keng, whose last thoughts were of me.

Father went to Shanghai, because the doctor in whom he had the most faith could not come to Peking, on account of his practice in Shanghai, and I was left at court to worry about him, and to pine for him, knowing that all the time he needed me.

He failed rapidly, and I finally persuaded Her Maj-

esty to allow me to go to Shanghai to see my father. . . .

"The day is coming soon," were among his last words to me, "when there will be no Manchu court in China, when there will no longer be Manchus and Chinese, but when all of us will be Chinese. I shall not live to see that day, but it is very near."

So one day the word came that Father was dying. I had never looked upon death, could not believe that Father actually was going. I went to his sickroom, climbed upon his bed as had been my habit since he had been bedfast.

But with his last feeble strength he waved me away.

"Go away! Go away!" he said feebly. "I don't wish you to see!"

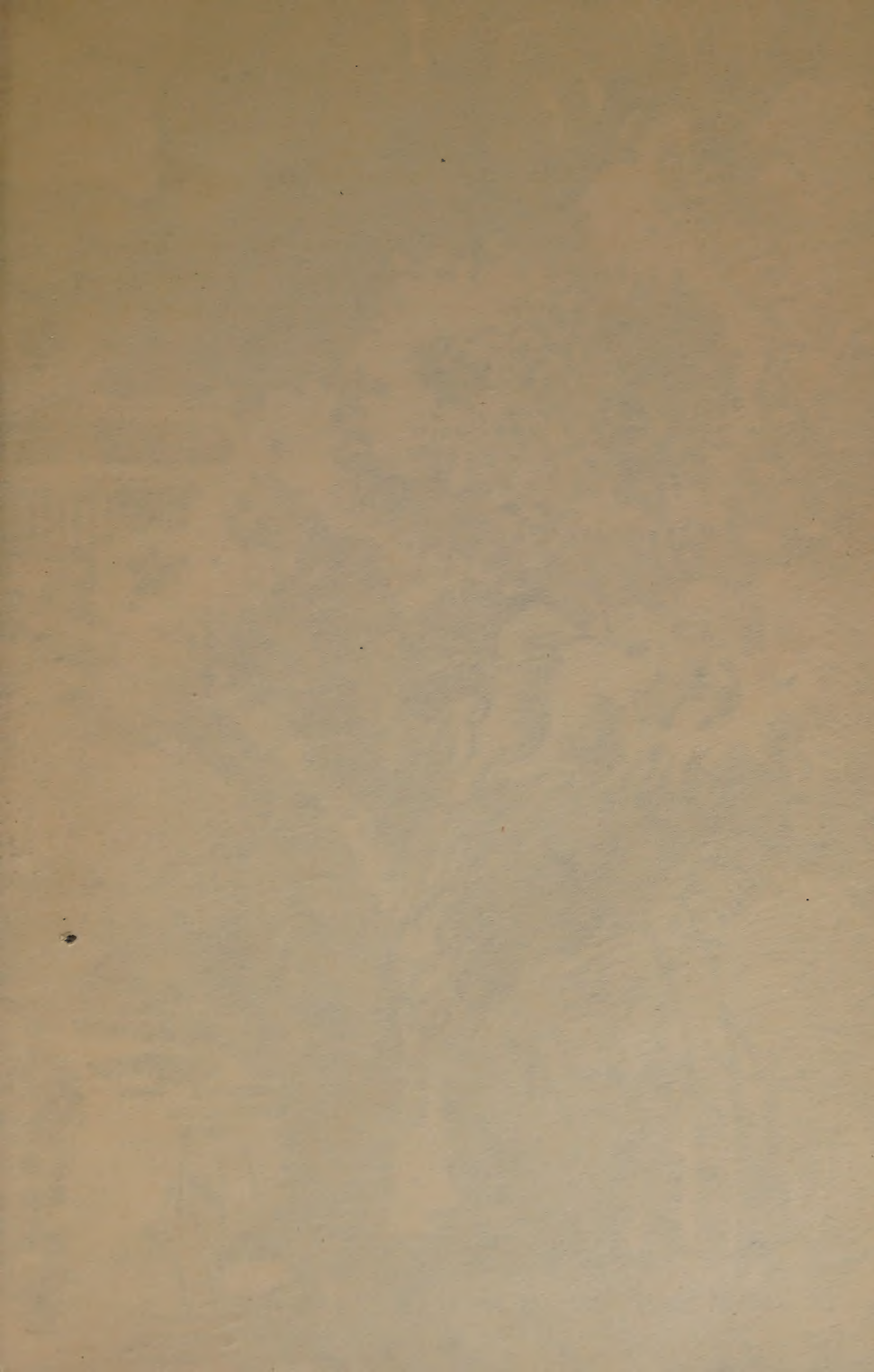
I did not understand. I thought he did not want me in his last moments, though I did not see then that I was witnessing his last moments. Now that time has softened somewhat the pain of the passing of the greatest man I ever knew, I understand his last gesture, motioning me away, telling me with his last strength to move away from his bed.

Father's last thoughts were of me, and when he did not wish me to come near unto him, he motioned me away, because he wished to spare me as he had always spared me pain; because he wished me to be spared the witnessing of his passing. But my heart glows now, and I am glad that I did not understand his meaning and that, not understanding, I held his hand, looked into his

face all drawn with suffering, and held the hands which had done so much for me.

Father had no religion, but when my time comes I hope to join him, and my faith in him is still unwavering, because I know that where he is there is no pain, no heartache, no sorrow, and no farewells.

THE END







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